# A TREASURY OF
# MYSTIC TERMS

# A TREASURY OF
# MYSTIC TERMS

PART II

SPIRITUAL GUIDES & PRACTITIONERS

VOLUME 7

WITH

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AND

INDEX OF HEADWORDS

JOHN DAVIDSON

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EDITED AND LARGELY WRITTEN BY

JOHN DAVIDSON

WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM

*A Treasury of Mystic Terms* has been compiled using the collective skills of an international team of researchers, contributors, assistant editors and readers with a wide variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. All members of the team are spiritual seekers, most of whom have found inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the mystics of Beas in India. All those involved have given freely to this project, both as a source of inspiration for themselves, and as a way of showing to others the essential unity behind all the apparent variety in religion, philosophy, and mysticism.

Everybody has a perspective or a bias – coloured glasses through which they view the world. So although every attempt has been made to handle each entry within its own religious or mystical context, if any particular perspective is detected, it will inevitably be that of the contributors and their perception of mysticism. This does not mean, of course, that the contributors have always been in agreement. The preparation of the *Treasury* has often resulted in healthy debate!

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# Acknowledgements

In the course of compiling the *Treasury,* the editorial team have consulted two major sources. Firstly, the scriptures and writings of mystics and others who have written on spiritual and mystical matters. Secondly, the works of scholars concerning these texts and their associated traditions. To all of these, we will be forever grateful. Among the mystics, we owe especial gratitude to the masters of Beas who have been, and who remain, the primary source of spiritual inspiration for most of the editorial team.

Among the many scholars and other writers, all sources and references have been cited in the appropriate places. In particular:

The translations of the Buddhist *Dhammapada* are founded mostly upon the work of S. Radhakrishnan and Narada Thera.

Most of the translations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* have drawn upon the earlier translations of S. Radhakrishnan and Swami Tapasyananda.

Quotations from the *Ādi Granth* are from the English translations of Manmohan Singh, Dr Gopal Singh, Dr Gurbachan Singh Talib, and Dr Sant Singh Khalsa.

The sayings of Heraclitus are found only as fragments, quoted in the works of other writers of antiquity. Various scholarly numbering systems exist for these fragments, the system employed here being that used by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton University Press, 1959).

Most of the translations of Rūmī's *Maśnavī* are based upon the work of R.A. Nicholson.

Many scholarly translations of Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* into European languages have been made from defective Pahlavi translations. The translations here are from the Avestan, and are based largely on the original work of Dr I.R.S. Taraporewala.

The indigenous Guaraní of eastern Paraguay, made up of three large subgroups – the Mbyá, the Paí Cayuá, and the Avá-Chiripá – are described in books and articles by the most notable experts in this field, Miguel Alberto Bartolomé, León Cádogan, Alfred Métraux, and Egon Schaden. Most of the information used for the Guaraní mystical terms derives from these scholars' studies of the Mybá and Avá-Chiripá. If a term is general to all indigenous Guaraní, it is labelled (G); if a term is known only to apply to the Avá-Chiripá subgroup, it is labelled (AC). The transliteration conventions used for all Avá-Chiripá terms are the same as those used

in Miguel Alberto Bartolomé's article, *Shamanism and Religion Among the Avá-Chiripá,* which resulted from his field studies in the northeastern region of Paraguay in 1968 and 1969. Bartolomé explains that since Paraguayan Guaraní has an officially recognized written form, he does not use phonetic symbols except the letter 'y' for the sixth guttural vowel.

Special mention must be made of the extensive compilation of material made by Dr Javad Nurbakhsh in his 15-volume *Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf,* translated by Terry Graham *et al.* (1984–2001) as *Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology.* Dr Nurbakhsh's considerable contribution to Sufi literature has been of great help to us in the compilation of the *Treasury,* and we have made significant use of this material, both the Persian and its English translation.

Existing dictionaries and encyclopaedias are naturally of great assistance when preparing a work such as the *Treasury.* We gladly acknowledge the particular help we have received from *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga,* Georg Feuerstein (Paragon House, New York, 1990); *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* (Brill, Leiden, 1960–2005); *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Zen Buddhism,* Helen Baroni (Rosen, New York, 2002); *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary,* Daito Shuppansha (Tokyo, 1965); *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism,* Damien Keown (Oxford University Press, 2003); *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines,* Ven. Nyanatiloka (Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, 1988); *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism,* Robert Buswell & Donald Lopez (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2014); *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English,* ed. Ernest Klein (Carta Jerusalem, University of Haifa, 1987); *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Judaica Multimedia, Jerusalem, 1997); *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1901–6, www.jewishencyclopedia.com); *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Co., 1907–14); *Wikipedia* (wikipedia.org, 2001–); *Hawaiian Dictionary*, Mary Kawena Pukui & Samuel Elbert (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1986); *Te Aka: Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index,* John Moorfield (www.maoridictionary.co.nz); *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, Herbert Williams (nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WillDict.html); and *The A to Z of Jainism,* Kristi Wiley (Vision, New Delhi, 2006).

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Thanks are also due to Dr John Smith, now retired from the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University, for his Unicode character fonts.

# Preface to Part I

*May I suggest that*
*You ask forgiveness for me*
*If my pen has gone astray or my foot has slipped.*
*For 'tis a perilous thing to plunge*
*Into the fathomless ocean of the divine mysteries;*
*And no easy task is it*
*To seek to discover the Lights Supernal*
*Which lie behind the veil.*

Al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār* 3:2, *MRG4* p.32;
*cf. FSC* p.159

*Speech is at best an honest lie.*

*The Book of Mirdad, BOM* p.68

This multivolume work is a collection, a treasury, a miscellany. Its primary objective is to elucidate the meaning of the essential terms used by the many different spiritual and religious traditions of the world throughout history. It is not primarily intended as a dictionary or as an encyclopaedia, nor is it a definitive treatise on any particular subject or religion. Its purpose is to help the ordinary person understand something of the basics concerning his or her religious background, within the framework of a universal understanding of spirituality.

Among these many pages, the reader will find a mixture. There should be something for everyone, whoever they are and whatever their bent of mind. But in a book of terms? That may sound unappealing, but there is a reason for it. Spiritual, mystical and religious teachings tend to use certain terms with particular meanings. Everyday words are often adopted, acquiring a special meaning in a spiritual context. Consequently, if a person wants to enquire deeply into his own religious background – or those of other cultures – it is essential that he understands the meaning of these terms. For if the symbols on the map are not understood, how can they be a guide to the destination?

*A Treasury of Mystic Terms* is therefore oriented around elucidating the meaning of these fundamental terms. But it is also much more than that. Some of the entries are extensive, more like essays. Moreover, the majority of these entries contain quotations that highlight the meaning of the term or group of terms under discussion. Many of these quotations are beautiful and inspiring; or they have a content that can be a guide in life. It is hoped, therefore, that this treasury will be a rich source of inspiration, as well as information.

Many people read books by dipping in here and there, even though the book may have been put together as a progression of ideas, not really designed for 'dipping'. This book is designed for the 'dipper'! And while it is certain that not everything in it will appeal to everyone, there should be something in it that will appeal to everyone. It is a book for browsing. So if the reader alights on something that does not appeal to him or her, he or she need only move on until something else is found that does.

The arrangement of terms by subject has been made after considerable deliberation. As a system, it may have its imperfections, not the least of which is that the terms depicting the universal spiritual principles of life do not always fall easily into neat categories. Sometimes, a term may have meanings that span a number of subject areas. Even keeping the topics as broad as possible, this is bound to happen from time to time. But the advantage is that a reader can browse a particular subject area with great ease. Reviewing the material that has been collected, and considering the kind of readers it is likely to attract, it has seemed clear that the majority of readers will not be looking up the meaning of particular terms so much as wanting to obtain information on a particular subject, or simply to browse at random. The alternative arrangement of terms in a continuous A to Z sequence would pose significant difficulties for the reader wanting to browse or make a comparative study of a particular subject. If anyone wants to look up any particular term, consulting the index should reveal where the term is located.

One of the fascinating aspects of universal spirituality is that its common denominator from a human perspective is not religious beliefs, nor educational systems, nor social structures, nor anything else like that. Its common denominator is people. It is fundamental to people, something present in all human beings. So, while reading about a particular topic as discussed and understood in one tradition, it is interesting to see how much commonality there is in the way that other religions and cultures have understood the same subject. Often, even the same metaphors and examples have been used by mystics with thousands of both years and miles between them. It also becomes evident how one religion borrows from and influences another, especially in its formative years. All this is highlighted by the simple expedient of arranging the terms by subject.

But what is meant by universal spirituality? It is the common ground, present in all religious and spiritual traditions. It is spirituality in the absence of religious creeds and specific belief systems. It is generic, not 'brand-specific'. It is inclusive, not exclusive, acknowledging a common basis to all traditions. It recognizes the existence of a God by whatever name He may be known and by whatever concepts He is understood – whether as a Supreme Being or Consciousness, a divine Energy, the Essence and Source of all things, a divine Intelligence and Controller, a Creator, an immanent or utterly transcendent power, and so on. It understands that man is separate from the Divine, and it includes the fundamental goal of probably all religions: the quest for a personal relationship with that primal Source. It emphasizes experience over belief and dogma, direct perception over philosophy and theology.

Since one of the intentions of this book has been an attempt to interpret correctly the *original* meaning of the writers of the many quotations, it may contain errors of interpretation. Certainly, there will be differences of opinion regarding interpretations. This is all to the good. The idea has never been to tell the reader what to think or what is what. If the reader is stimulated to think for himself, then our purpose has been accomplished. Everyone has to make his own journey and discover Truth for himself. But that Truth will not be found in this book, nor in any other; for the best that books can offer is inspiration, not personal experience. But then, that may also be understood as an opinion. So take it as such, and follow your heart wherever it may lead.

# Preface to Part II

More than a decade has elapsed since the publication of Part I of this *Treasury* in 2003. During this time, the team of contributors has not been idle. In fact, the six volumes that were originally projected to make up the second and final part of the *Treasury* have grown beyond all original expectations. So much material has been gathered concerning the world's spiritual traditions that it seems as if it will occupy at least a further sixteen volumes, followed by a single volume containing a full bibliography, glossary, indices, cross-references, *etc.* These volumes have been divided into three parts, according to subject area, and we are now presenting the four volumes of a new Part II. The remaining twelve volumes comprising Parts III and IV are already in an advanced stage of preparation, and it should be possible to bring them to publication within the next few years.

The primary intention behind the *Treasury* has not changed. Our goal remains that of presenting the spiritual and mystical aspects of the world's religious and spiritual traditions in such a way that their universal aspects become evident. The innermost essence, consciousness or spirit of all human beings is fundamentally the same. Cultural and religious colour and texture will always be there, and the minds of human beings themselves provide a rich and varied tapestry, no two the same. Yet we are all a part of one universal ocean of spirit – spiritual beings dwelling for some time in a material world. If we could only realize something of that oneness, then the majority of human problems – personal and global – would evaporate in the light of love and true spiritual wisdom.

# Editorial Notes

Translations of the many texts quoted are either original or have been taken from published translations, although, in some instances, our choice of accepted translations of primary sacred texts has been limited. In the interests of clarity and after consulting the original source language wherever possible, some translations have been lightly edited or have had explanatory words added in parentheses. We have, for instance, tended to modernize old-fashioned English. In some cases, where a number of scholarly translations are available of a particular text, we have made a collation, indicating this by a reference to the various sources consulted. Further, because of the variety of typographic styles found in the many quotations, we have standardized the layout, as well as the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of words. This prevents frequent inconsistencies in the text which may have resulted in confusion. Further, to avoid the confusion to the eye caused by overpunctuation, we have also dispensed with the use of an ellipsis (three dots) when the text we quote begins or ends in mid-sentence of the original. Reported conversations and material quoted within the main text are identified with double quote marks ("…"), single quote marks being reserved for 'particularized' text or quotes within double quote marks. The aim has always been to help convey meaning with clarity, accuracy, and simplicity.

Any significant clarifications or additions to a translation offered by ourselves or the original translator have been placed in round brackets, while significant conjectured words or phrases, usually provided by the original translator to fill gaps in an original, defective manuscript, appear in square brackets ([ ]). In the interests of readability, some of the square and round brackets of the original translations have been omitted where the correctness of the bracketed text seemed reasonable. Where translations used have been edited for any reason, this is indicated by the use of *cf.* (Latin, *confero;* I compare) in the source reference.

We have, for example, made extensive use of R.A. Nicholson's translation of Rūmī's *Maśnavī,* taking Nicholson at his word,[1] and using his translation as a basis for most of our own. In many cases, our text simply chooses optional text suggested in brackets or footnotes, often omitting the brackets to improve readability. We have also occasionally used a synonym for some word or other, especially those of an abstruse or rare nature. Antiquated English has also been modernized, particularly as

regards the use of 'thee', 'thou', and so on. But generally we have stayed close to Nicholson's translation. Quotations containing deviations from Nicholson's translation, other than punctuation and layout, have been referenced with a *cf.*

Most non-English words are italicized, with the exception of the proper names of people and places, either historical or legendary. However, the names of gods and goddesses are italicized. In translated quotations, terms under discussion and other relevant terms have been placed in brackets following their translation.

As far as possible, quotations are referenced to both an original language source and a particular translation where this is not our own. However, in a few instances, especially among the Arabic and Persian (Sufi) entries, the primary source of passages has not always been given in the secondary source where we have found them, and we have sometimes been unable to trace the primary source. In these relatively few instances, we provide just the reference to the secondary source. If any reader who knows the text we are quoting is able to supply the primary source reference for use in the next edition, we would, of course, be grateful to receive it.

Generally speaking, non-English terms are used for the entry headword where they are still in common use or where they are familiar to readers of the ancient literature. Where the term would only be meaningful to a handful of specialist scholars – as with Mandaean, Syriac, early Mesopotamian texts, and so on – the term has usually been given in English. Only when such non-English terms are of particular interest are they used as headwords.

The attempt has been made to use those translations of the Bible, Jewish and Christian, which have meaning for the reader and elucidate the mystic sense of the terms under discussion. It is worth noting that chapter and verse numbers sometimes vary slightly between Christian and Jewish translations. This mostly affects the *Psalms,* which in the Jewish translations are generally one verse longer because the initial salutation is numbered as verse one.

Entries for most non-English terms begin with a *'Lit.'* – meaning 'literally'. This is not intended as an etymology of the word. It generally refers to the literal or everyday meaning of the word, disregarding any mystical or spiritual context. Sometimes, in order to increase readability of the literal definition, we also include the definite ('the') or indefinite article ('a'), although the equivalent article may not be present in the original language of the term as given. Some terms given in English are followed by a short definition of their mundane meaning where this could be helpful to the reader, particularly as it relates to the use of the term in mystical literature.

Many entries end with 'See also: . . .'. The terms so listed should be taken only as suggestions for further browsing. They lead either to entries where the same term is further elucidated, or to entries with comparable or sometimes specifically contrasting meanings, either in the same or different languages. Consecutive terms that are very similar are not normally so listed, since they are easily seen.

Our use of capitalization is largely as a means of succinctly conveying information. Generally, we have tried not to be 'capitalists', since their overuse can make a text uneven and more difficult to read; but capitals can be useful, and are sometimes the correct form to use, as in proper names. Although languages such as Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi have no capitals, we have followed a common custom and used capitals in romanized transliteration. Names of God or the Supreme Being are capitalized, as are most pronouns referring to God (*viz.* You, Your, Yourself, He, Him, Himself, Thee, Thou, Thine, Thyself, We, Me, and Myself). This makes it clear who is being referenced without necessarily having to indicate it in some other way. Specific names for the creative power are also capitalized to highlight their meaning in that context *(e.g.* Wisdom, Name, Word, *Shabd, Davar, Kalimah).* However, unlike Part I, names and metaphors for masters *(e.g.* shepherd, *satguru, murshid, etc.)* are all lowercased. The terms used for some essential concepts outside these categories have also been capitalized, such as the Muslim 'Names *(Asmā')*' 'Attributes *(Ṣifāt)*', 'Acts *(Afʿāl)*', and 'Signs' or 'Works *(Āthār)*' of *Allāh.* Usually, the names of the higher regions of creation have not been capitalized, although it is true that some are used as proper names. There are simply too many of them, and the text would have become too cumbersome. However, where these terms are non-English, they are in italics, which helps identify their special meaning.

With regard to the dating system, we have used the more universally oriented CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before Common Era), rather than AD *(Anno Domini),* BC (Before Christ), AH *(Anno Hegirae),* or SH (Solar Hijri). To use a dating system based on context – Christian, Jewish, Indian, or Muslim – would simply cause too much confusion.

Because of modern attitudes, writers in English are faced with a difficulty concerning the use of 'he', 'him' and so forth, when in fact referring to *all* human beings – men *and* women. In the past, a generalized person or individual was always referred to as a 'he', and that was that. In present times, people are more sensitive. However, the contortions of language required to avoid the use of gender-specific words in a tightly worded text such as this have sometimes forced us to revert to the more traditional use of the masculine, even when the feminine is also clearly included. Most English speakers forget that in many other languages, where words themselves have a gender, such problems do not exist. The

genders of a 'person', of 'God', of the 'Spirit' – and so on – are simply a rule of language. In French, for instance, a person *(une personne)* is feminine, but a human being *(un être humain)* is masculine. Hence, such sentences as *'Bill est une personne, Mary est un être humain'* and *'Dieu n'est ni une personne ni un être humain'* are correct. It is unlikely that this solution will please everybody, but we have done our best. So far as the editors are concerned, all human beings share a common and natural equality, regardless of sex, race, colour, religion, social position, or any other external difference. God, of course, is far beyond all physical attributes, even if it is traditional to speak of that divine Power as a 'He'.

***Languages and Transliteration Systems***

Since this *Treasury* is intended as much for the lay reader as the specialist, every attempt has been made to make the text and its presentation accessible, rather than daunting. It is, after all, a book about mysticism, not language. This has meant, for example, that while our transliteration of the various languages has been based upon standard scholarly systems, we have simplified these where it makes for better readability or is less likely to confuse a lay reader. Thus, for example, we write Kṛishṇa and *shabd,* rather than the more scholarly Kṛṣṇa and *śabd.*

Each of the headwords with which the entries start is also accorded a language code (see below). Where more than one language code is given, the order represents – where relevant – the historical evolution of the word through the various languages. Thus, (S/H/Pu) indicates that the Sanskrit (S) preceded the Hindi (H) and the Punjabi (Pu), (S/Pa) that the Sanskrit preceded the Pali (Pa), and (A/P) that the Arabic (A) preceded the Persian (P). While this is largely accurate, languages are not so conveniently structured that the words comprising them can be neatly, unambiguously and incontrovertibly categorized and labelled. In fact, the language or languages to which a word or term belongs are not always clearly definable. This is particularly true between Arabic and Persian, and between Sanskrit, Hindi, and Punjabi. The designation (H), for example, also includes a number of North Indian vernacular variants, used by various saints in their poetry.

There are also a great many Arabic words that have become a part of Persian. And although Arabic and Persian share a common script, and many words are written with the same spelling, the pronunciation is significantly different. In the case of Arabic and Persian, we have followed a simplified version of the US Library of Congress transliteration system which uses letter-for-letter romanization rather than attempting to render the words entirely phonetically. Some allowances for the differences between Arabic and Persian pronunciation are accounted for, but in general this system favours Arabic pronunciation. This is unfortunate for

Persian, and we are aware of it, but the alternative would be to romanize most words in two different ways, depending upon whether the word is being used in an Arabic or Persian context. Using such a system, many romanized spellings of the same word would become significantly different from each other, causing confusion to the reader who knows neither language, and is unlikely to pronounce either word correctly, however they are romanized. Moreover, it would also require us to assess the likely pronunciation of authors, many of whom lived centuries ago – a more or less impossible task.

The Arabic-Persian situation is further compounded by the fact that many Persian Sufis have written all or parts of their texts in Arabic. The *Qur'ān,* for example, is commonly quoted in its original Arabic, even when the main text is in Persian. In some instances, therefore, were a strictly phonetic system being employed, one quote may require the use of two different romanizations of the same word! It is therefore with apologies to the sentiments of Persian readers that we have used the system outlined above which phonetically favours the Arabic. Although largely insensitive to Persian pronunciation, this is simply the least confusing way of doing things for the majority of our English-speaking readers.

In many cases, the Persian term is the same as the Arabic except for the addition of the definite article *(al-)* in Arabic. In these instances, to avoid unnecessary repetition, the language designation is given as (A/P). Also, when *al-* occurs in a leading headword, it is placed after the headword itself (*e.g.* **insān al-kāmil**, **al-**). In keeping with common practice, names that include *al-,* such as al-Ghazālī are spelled with a lowercased *al-,* unless they happen to start a sentence.

For Pali, the language of the early Buddhist scriptures, which was largely an oral language with no unique script of its own, we have used a slightly simplified version of a standard method of romanization employing diacritical marks.

When it comes to Sanskrit and Hindi, we are on firmer ground because there is a more or less standard and accepted transliteration of the *devanāgarī* alphabet, of which we have used a simplified version. Punjabi is transliterated in a manner compatible with the Hindi and Sanskrit. The designation of words to particular languages, however, is not straightforward. While the purists may insist, for example, that some words are not Hindi, but Punjabi (and *vice versa*), the reality is that neither the spoken nor written languages are clearly defined. Words have travelled from one language to the other and back again, and in many parts of North India, the two languages are inextricably intertwined. Moreover, we are dealing with texts spanning many centuries, during which time these languages themselves, as well as the spelling of many words, have changed, evolved, and merged. The Punjabi of the *Ādi*

*Granth,* for instance, though the common Punjabi of the times when it was written, is different from modern Punjabi, just as the English of Chaucer is different from the English of today. Therefore, the allocation of a language code to some of the terms should only be taken as a general indication. There can never be a precise allocation. Also, terms such as *alakh lok* (Pu. imperceptible region), for instance, which have a Sanskrit equivalent *(alakshya-loka)* that is not actually used in the same way in Sanskrit literature, are not identified in the *Treasury* as Sanskrit terms. When allocating language abbreviations our intention is to identify whether the term is actually used in a mystical context in the literature of that particular language.

A further source of confusion exists regarding the use of compound words in Sanskrit, which are often – but not always – split into individual words in Hindi, Punjabi, and the various associated vernaculars. We have therefore adopted the following system as a reasonable compromise. Compound Hindi or Punjabi words are generally rendered as separate words, regardless of how they appear in the source text *(e.g. haṭha yoga).* Compound Sanskrit and Pali words are either spelled as one word, or they are hyphenated in order to indicate the various elements of the word, or they are rendered as separate words. This permits the layman's eye to note that the Sanskrit word or term is the equivalent to the Hindi or Punjabi. Terms or names that use a generic word are generally spelled separately *(e.g. Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad, mūlādhāra chakra).* However, a number of exceptions to these rules are made for a number of reasons *(e.g. Brahmaloka, satyaloka, padmāsana).*

Because of the way written language evolves over time, one word may be spelled in various ways, even in the original language. Again, we have opted for a simplifying approach. We have certainly not tried to be exhaustive of all the variants of particular words. A number of these are either vernacular variations or have even been coined by individual writers simply to meet the poetic needs of rhythm and rhyme. In these instances, we have generally used the word in its 'uncorrupted' modern form, even though identification of the 'uncorrupted' form is sometimes a matter of opinion. For example, terms such as *Shabd* (Word) and *desh* (region) also appear as the Hindi vernacular variants *Sabd* and *des.* In many instances, however, we have simply indicated the usage of such terms in quotations as *Shabd* and *desh.* In the Punjabi of the *Ādi Granth,* however, where there the 'sh' sound is absent, we have used the 's' form of a term throughout, and have generally been more precise in our transliteration of terms from the *Ādi Granth.* Where a word or name has become anglicized through common usage, like the names of Indian states or the names of contemporary or recent spiritual leaders, we have used the anglicized form, without italics or diacritical marks.

We have used a similar simplifying approach to terms of more than one word where the order of the words in the original language has been changed to meet the needs of the poetry or for some other reason. Further, when illustrating the usage of particular words, we have commonly treated grammatical inflections as the root word itself. For instance, when a word in an original language translates to a phrase in English such as 'with God' or 'from God', we treat it as an example of the root word, without pointing out that it is an inflection that is actually being used.

The same is true of the plural forms of words. We have given these only when relevant to the particular discussion, but not as a matter of course. In fact, especially among Indian languages, following a common custom in English literature, we have generally used a romanized plural form. Hence the use of such hybrid words as *siddhis, bhikkhus,* and *yogīs.*

The transliterated spelling of the Hebrew terms follows a modified version of the Library of Congress system, which corresponds in many instances to the treatment of Arabic. The significant differences are in disregarding the *aleph,* otherwise transliterated as a superior comma (ʾ), and in rendering both the *kaf* and the *qaf* with the letter *k,* rather than *k* and *q.* In contemporary Hebrew, there is no difference in pronunciation between the two letters and, in most modern transliterations, they are rendered the same.

Transliteration of Chinese poses greater problems than most other languages. Chinese is a tonal language, where each character (word) is pronounced with one of five tonal inflexions (pitch and direction of sound). There are, for instance, more than twenty-five characters all transliterated as *'ma',* each with a different meaning – *e.g.* mother, hemp, horse, curse, and question. In writing, pitch variations can be indicated by the addition of either tone marks or tone numbers. Thus, *ma* (mother) is rendered as *mā* or *ma*[1], and *ma* (hemp) as *má* or *ma*[2]. Which word is intended is generally conveyed by the tone mark or number, together with its context, though there is the added challenge of multiple characters not only being transliterated the same, but having the same tone!

Tone marks are not normally added to Chinese text, but in dictionaries, encyclopaedias and scholarly texts, tone marks or tone numbers are often employed. In these instances, wherever roman transliterations are used, a tone mark or number usually accompanies the word, especially when one word has different meanings depending on the pronunciation. In this publication, tone marks in the form of accents or diacritical marks have been used, following the Pinyin system of romanization that has been used as the standard system in the Peoples' Republic of China since 1958.

1. R.A. Nicholson, *Introduction, Maśnavī, MJR2* pp.xv–xvii.

# Abbreviations

***General***

Abbreviations that are a common part of written language are not included in this list.

| | |
|---|---|
| C4th | fourth century (*e.g.)* |
| *cf.* | *confero,* compare (L. I compare) |
| *col.* | column |
| *fol.* | folio |
| *ff.* | and the following (pages, lines, *etc.*) |
| *lit.* | literally |
| n. | foot- or endnote(s) |
| *passim* | here and there throughout (L) |
| p. | page |
| pp. | pages |
| pron. | pronounced |
| ret. | retrieved web page, followed by the month and year of retrieval |
| ▸1 ▸3 ▸4 | Indicates a yet-to-be-published entry in Parts I, III, or IV |

***Dates***

| | |
|---|---|
| *b.* | born |
| *c.* | circa, about |
| *d.* | died |
| *fl.* | flourished |
| *r.* | reigned or ruled |
| AH | *Anno Hegirae,* Muslim lunar calendar, from 622 CE, the Hegira *(al-Hijrah),* the year of Muḥammad's flight to Madīnah |
| BCE | Before Common Era, equivalent to BC. |
| CE | Common Era, equivalent to AD. |
| SH | Solar Hijri, the official solar calendar of Iran and Afghanistan, starting on the vernal equinox. |

***Languages***

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Arabic | C | Chinese | Gk | Greek |
| AC | Avá-Chiripá | Es | Spanish | H | Hindi |
| Am | Aramaic | Fr | French | He | Hebrew |
| Av | Avestan | G | Guaraní | Hw | Hawaian |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | Japanese | P | Persian | S | Sanskrit |
| L | Latin | Pa | Pali | Su | Sumerian |
| M | Marathi | Pk | Prakrit | T | Tibetan |
| Md | Mandaean | Pu | Punjabi | U | Urdu |
| Mo | Māori | Pv | Pahlavi | | |

***Sources Cited***

See *Bibliography* for full details of published works. Published collections of the writings of Indian Saints have been referred to in source references as below. Other collections published as the *Bānī, Granthāvalī, Padāvalī* or *Shabdāvalī* of various Indian Saints have been similarly abbreviated.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Bullā Sāhib kā Shabd Sār* | *Shabd Sār* |
| *Charaṇdās Jī kī Bānī* | *Bānī* |
| *Dariyā Sāhib ke chune hue Shabd* | *Chune hue Shabd* |
| *Dhanī Dharamdās Jī kī Shabdāvalī* | *Shabdāvalī* |
| *Kabīr Granthāvalī* | *Granthāvalī* |
| *Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak* | *Bījak* |
| *Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah* | *Sākhī Sangrah* |
| *Keshavdās Jī kī Amīghūnt* | *Amīghūnt* |
| *Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh* | *Kullīyāt* |
| *Mīrā Bṛihat Padāvalī* | *Bṛihat Padāvalī* |
| *Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu* | *Sindhu* |
| *Nāmdev kī Hindi Padāvalī* | *Padāvalī* |
| *Ravidās Darshan* | *Darshan* |
| *Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī* | *Vāṇī* |
| *Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā* | *Gāthā* |
| *Tulsīdās kī Bārahmāsī* | *Bārahmāsī* |
| *Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī* | *Shabdāvalī* |

Other books and texts cited are abbreviated as follows:

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|---|---|
| AAA | *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,* ed. & tr. W.R. Wright (English). |
| AAF1–2 | *Owrād-al-Ahbāb va Fosūs-al-Ādāb,* 2 vols., Abu-al-Mufākhir Yahyā Bākharzi, ed. Iraj Afshar. |
| AASZ | *Ano Ano: The Seed,* Kristin Zambucka. |
| ABC | *Apocalypse of Baruch,* tr. R.H. Charles. |
| ABCD | *Atthasālinī,* ed. Edward Müller. |
| ABSC | *Atma-Bodha of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya,* Swami Chinmayananda. |
| ABST | *The Alchemical Body,* David White. |
| ABV1–4 | *Abhidharmakośabhaṣyam of Vasubandhu,* 4 vols., tr. Leo Pruden. |
| ACJV | *The Arhats in China and Japan,* M.V. de Visser. |

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| ACPD | *The Ancient Concept of Progress,* E.R. Dodds. |
| ADP | *Abandonment to Divine Providence,* J.-P. de Caussade, tr. J. Beevers. |
| AETR | *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion,* Stephen Eskildsen. |
| AF1–2 | *The Apostolic Fathers,* 2 vols., tr. Kirsopp Lake. |
| AFLF | *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta,* ed. V. Rose. |
| AGG | *Sri Guru Granth Sahib,* 4 vols., tr. Dr Gopal Singh. |
| AGK | *Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Khalsa Consensus Translation,* tr. Dr Sant Singh Khalsa. |
| AGT | *Sri Guru Granth Sahib,* 4 vols., tr. Dr Gurbachan Singh Talib. |
| AH1–2 | *Against Heresies,* in *The Writings of Irenaeus,* 2 vols., tr. A. Roberts & W.H. Rambaud. |
| AICL | *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature,* tr. J.W. McCrindle. |
| AITM | *Ancient Indian Tradition & Mythology Series,* ed. J.L. Shastri & G.P. Bhatt. |
| AJT | *Annales,* 15 vols., Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. |
| AKF | *All the King's Falcons,* John Renard. |
| AKKS | *Ācārya Kundakunda's Samayasāra,* ed. & tr. A. Chakravarti. |
| AKMI | *Asrār-i Khudī,* Muḥammad Iqbāl. |
| AKN1–2 | *The Apadāna of the Khuddaka Nikāya,* 2 vols., ed. Mary Lilley. |
| AKRT | *Abhinavagupta,* John Dupuche. |
| ALMG | *Shah Abdul Latif,* M.M. Gidvani. |
| ALSE | *As Long As Space Endures,* ed. Edward Arnold. |
| AMAS | *Al-Muʿjam al-Ṣūfī,* Khānam Dr Suʿād al-Ḥakīm. |
| AMBF | *Aḥādīś-i Maśnavī,* B. Furūzānfar. |
| AMEI | *Te Aka: Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index,* John Moorfield. |
| AMM | *Dīvān-i Ḥakīm Abū al-Majd Majdūd ibn-i Ādam Sanā'ī Ghaznavī,* ed. Mudarris Riżavī. |
| AMMB | *Some Aspects of Maori Myth and Religion,* Elsdon Best. |
| AMRC | *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of A.D. 320,* tr. James Ware. |
| AMSB | *Āpta-Mīmāṁsā of Ācārya Samantabhadra,* ed. & tr. S. Ghosal. |
| AMT | *Āthār-i Darvīsh Muḥammad Ṭabasī,* ed. Īraj Afshār & Muḥammad Taqī Dāneshpazhuh. |
| AN | *Asrār Nāmah,* Farīd al-Din ʿAṭṭar Nīshshābūrī, ed. Ṣ. Gawharīn. |
| ANF1–10 | *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* 10 vols., ed. A. Roberts & J. Donaldson. |
| ANNP | *Anguttara Nikaya,* Nyanaponika Thera. |
| ANST | *Anguttara Nikaya,* tr. Soma Thera. |
| ANT | *The Apocryphal New Testament,* tr. M.R. James. |
| ANTB | *Anguttara Nikaya,* tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| ANTE | *The Apocryphal New Testament,* ed. J.K. Elliott. |

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| ANTH | *The Authentic New Testament,* tr. H.J. Schonfield. |
| ANTW | *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations,* tr. A. Walker. |
| AOT | *The Apocryphal Old Testament,* ed. H.E.D. Sparks. |
| APAK | *Ashta Pahuda,* Acharya Kundkund, tr. Paras Das Jain Niyaytirthi. |
| APAW | *Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.* |
| APOT1–2 | *The Apocrypha and Pseudoepigrapha of the Old Testament in English,* 2 vols., R.H. Charles. |
| AQIM | "Ibn Al-ʿArabī and the Qabbalah," Ronald Kiener. |
| ARRV | *Awakening to Reality,* tr. Fabrizio Pregadio. |
| ARSR | *Adhyatma Ramayana,* tr. Swami Tapasyananda. |
| ARTM | *Ancestral Recordings of Tainui,* Mitaki Ra. |
| ASAM | *A Manual of Abhidhamma,* ed. & tr. Nārada Mahā Thera. |
| ASBE | *An Analytical Study on Buddhist Eschatology,* Shih You Zhi. |
| ATC | *Awakening to the Tao,* Liu I-ming, tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| ATCN | *Aztec Thought and Culture,* Miguel León-Portilla, tr. Jack Davis. |
| ATI | Access to Insight, www.accesstoinsight.org. |
| ATRB | "Andalusí Theosophy," J. Vahid Brown. |
| ATS1–2 | *Asrār al-Tawḥīd fī Maqāmāt al-Shaykh Abī Saʿīd,* 2 vols., M. ibn Munavvar, ed. & intro. M. Rażā Shafāʾī Kadkanī. |
| ATUS | *Anîs al-Tâlibîn va ʿUddat al-Sâlikîn,* Salâh b. Mubârak Bukhârî, ed. Khalîl Sarioglu & T.H. Sobhani. |
| AWMG | *Ayyuhā al-Walad,* Ḥajjat al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, intro. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAlī Qurah Dāghī. |
| AYA | *The Holy Qurʾān,* tr. & comm. ʿAbdullah Yūsuf ʿAlī. |
| AZJW | *The A to Z of Jainism,* Kristi Wiley. |
| AZPD | *A to Z Photo Dictionary,* Mark Schumacher. |
| BBAV | *Bahiṇā Bāī,* Justin Abbott. |
| BBDG | *A Buddhist Bible,* Dwight Goddard. |
| BBH | *The Book of Balance and Harmony,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| BBHE | *Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism,* L.M. Joshi. |
| BC | *The Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex,* tr. Violet MacDermot. |
| BCB1–3 | *Breviarium Chaldaicum,* 3 vols., P. Bedjan. |
| BCGS | *Buddha is the Center of Gravity,* Joshu Sasaki Roshi, tr. F. Akino. |
| BCL1–4 | *Basil of Caesarea,* 4 vols., tr. R. Deferrari. |
| BDB | *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung Balai's,* K.V. Zetterstéen. |
| BDBS | *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature,* Har Dayal. |
| BDC | *The Book of Divine Consolation of the Blessed Angela of Foligno,* tr. M. Steegman. |
| BDV1–6 | *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka),* 6 vols., tr. I.B. Horner. |

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| BE | *The Book of Enoch,* tr. R.H. Charles. |
| BESA | *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis,* N. Hanif. |
| BESW | *Black Elk: The Sacred Ways of a Lakota,* Wallace Black Elk & William Lyon. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| BEW | *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom and Little Book of Truth,* Henry Suso, tr. James Clark. |
| BFFM | *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna,* Daniel Boucher. |
| BGPC | *The Gospel of Buddha,* Paul Carus. |
| BGT | *Bhagavad Gītā,* tr. Swāmī Tapasyānanda. |
| BJ | *Bahāristān,* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī. |
| BLAW | *The Bowl of Light,* Hank Wesselman. |
| BLB | *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved,* Ramón Lull, tr. E. Allison Peers. |
| BLBR | *The Book of Legends (Sefer ha-Aggadah),* tr. W.G. Braude, ed. Hayim Nahman Bialik & Yehoshua Hana Rawnitzki. |
| BLD1–3 | *Buddhist Legends,* 3 vols., Buddhaghosa, tr. E.W. Burlingame. |
| BLDO | *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order,* Herman Oldenberg, tr. William Hoey. |
| BMC1–2 | *Buddhist Monastic Code,* 2 parts, tr. & comm. Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu. |
| BNUS | *Buddha Nature,* Arya Maitreya, comm. Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé, expl. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, tr. R. Fuchs. |
| BOM | *The Book of Mirdad,* Mikhail Naimy. |
| BOS | *Badāyi',* ed. & tr. Lucas White King. |
| BPS | Buddhist Publication Society, www.bps.lk. |
| BPT1–5 | *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* 5 vols., tr. & ann. G.V. Tagare. |
| BSB | *Bhīkhā Sāhib kī Bānī.* |
| BSEC | *Buddhist Scriptures,* ed. & tr. Edward Conze. |
| BSFD | *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness,* Shunryu Suzuki, ed. M. Weitsman & M. Wenger. |
| BSOAS | *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.* |
| BSPS | *Bulleh Shah,* J.R. Puri & T.R. Shangari. |
| BSS | *Bhīkhā Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī.* |
| BTBH | *Benjamin of Tudela,* tr. Marcus Adler (Hebrew). |
| BTIC | *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan,* ed. William De Bary. |
| BTLD | *Buddhism in Tibet,* Emil Schlagintweit. |
| BTOT | *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality,* Garma C.C. Chang. |
| BWFP | *Buddhism of Wisdom & Faith,* Thich Thien Tam, tr. Sutra Translation Committee of the US and Canada. |
| BWIC | *Ibn 'Ata' Illah: The Book of Wisdom,* tr. V. Danner, and *Kwaja Abdullah Ansari: Intimate Conversations,* tr. W. Thackston. |
| CAMI | *Chinese Art,* Patricia Bjaaland Welch. |

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| CAN | *The Chronology of Ancient Nations,* al-Biruni, tr. C.E. Sachau. |
| CATK | *Court Art of the Tang,* Patricia Karetzky. |
| CBBF | *Chandra Bhān Brahman – Life and Works,* A.H. Fārooquī. |
| CBD | *The Conference of the Birds,* Farid ud-Din Attar, tr. Afkham Darbandi & Dick Davis. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| CBET | *The Concept of the Buddha,* Guang Xing. |
| CBSP | *The Catalpa Bow,* Carmen Blacker. |
| CCED | *Cosmos and Community,* Livia Kohn. |
| CDBB | *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha,* 2 vols., tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| CDIP | *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy,* John Grimes. |
| CDP | *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* ed. E. Hamilton & H. Cairns. |
| CDSV | *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes (2004). See *Acknowledgements.* |
| CEDH | *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English,* ed. Ernest Klein. |
| CEUI | "Christliche Evangelientexte in der Überlieferung der iranisch-manichäischen Literatur," W. Sundermann. |
| CFFC | *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century,* C. White. |
| CGAP | *St Augustine: Concerning the City of God against the Pagans,* tr. Henry Bettenson. |
| CGDO | *A Chanting Guide,* Dhammayut Order in the USA. |
| CH | *The Clementine Homilies,* tr. Thomas Smith *et al.* |
| CHHM | "On the Concept of the *Hijiri* (Holy Man)," Ichiro Hori. |
| CHMP | *Classical Hindu Mythology,* ed. & tr. Cornelia Dimmit & J.A.B. van Buitenen. |
| CHVK | *Commentary on Habakkuk (Pesher on Habakkuk 1QpHab),* tr. G. Vermes, rev. R.A. Kraft. |
| CIT1–8 | *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane,* 8 vols., A.J. Wensinck *et al.* |
| CJTT | *Compendium of Jainism,* T.K. Tukol. |
| CMMD | *Concentration and Meditation,* Christmas Humphreys. |
| CMNS | *Códice Matritense de la Real Academia de la Historia,* ed. Francisco de Paso y Troncoso. |
| CMP | *Climate of Monastic Prayer,* Thomas Merton. |
| CMSA | *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality,* ed. A.H. Armstrong. |
| CNRB | *10,000 Chinese Numbers,* Roy Bates. |
| CNSA | "Comparative Notes on Sanaʾi and ʿAttar," J.T.P. Bruijn. |
| CPM | *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans,* tr. E.S. Drower. |
| CPS | *Commentaire sur les paradoxes des soufis (Sharh-e Shathîyât),* Ruzbehan Baqli Shirazi, ed. Henry Corbin. |
| CR | *The Clementine Recognitions,* tr. Thomas Smith. |
| CSEW | *Circle in the Square,* Elliott Wolfson. |

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| CSK | *The Cell of Self-Knowledge,* ed. Edmund Gardner. |
| CSM | *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka,* ed. Wustenfeld. |
| CSRK | "Socrates, the Freethinker," R. Janko. |
| CTIH | *Chuang Tzu,* tr. David Hinton. |
| CTMP | *The Book of Chuang Tzu,* tr. Martin Palmer. |
| CTSS | *The Essential Chuang Tzu,* ed. & tr. Sam Hamill & J.P. Seaton. |
| CTSU | *Commentary on Tattvārtha Sūtra of Vācaka Umāsvāti,* Pandit Sukhalalji, tr. K.K. Dixit. |
| CTT | *Chuang Tzu,* tr. Herbert Giles. |
| CU | *The Cloud of Unknowing,* tr. William Johnston. |
| CUCW | *The Cloud of Unknowing,* tr. Clifton Wolters. |
| CUEU | *The Cloud of Unknowing,* tr. Evelyn Underhill. |
| CVAB | *The Call of the Vedas,* A.C. Bose. |
| CW | *Angelus Silesius: The Cherubinic Wanderer,* tr. Maria Shrady. |
| CWCT | *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu,* tr. Burton Watson. |
| CWJC1–3 | *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross,* 3 vols., ed. & tr. E. Allison Peers. |
| CWLT | *The Complete Works of Lao Tzu,* tr. & elucidated Ni Hua-Ching. |
| CWMV | *Change We Must,* Nana Veary. |
| CWSV1–9 | *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* 9 vols. |
| CWT1–3 | *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila,* 3 vols., tr. Kieran Kavanaugh & Otilio Rodriquez. |
| CWTA1–3 | *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus,* 3 vols., ed. & tr. E. Allison Peers. |
| DAA | *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle,* tr. G. Phillips. |
| DAAL | *Denys the Areopagite,* A. Louth. |
| DASN | *Dīvān-i ʿAṭṭār,*incl. *Qaṣā'id, Tarjīʿāt, va Ghazaliyāt,* ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī. |
| DBGT | *A Dictionary of Buddhism,* Trevor Ling. |
| DBRD | *Dialogues of the Buddha,* Part I, tr. T.W. Rhys Davids. |
| DCBP | *The Dhammapada and Commentary,* tr. Nārada Thera, ed. Bhikkhu Pesala. |
| DCMU | *Dadu: The Compassionate Mystic,* K.N. Upadhyaya. |
| DDB1–2 | *Dādū Dayāl kī Bānī,* 2 vols. |
| DDMW | *Dynamic and Different: Mana Wahine,* Rosemary Madden. |
| DDRR | *Rubâi'yât,* Mawlânâ Djalâl-od-Dîn Rûmî, tr. Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch & Djamchid Mortazavi. |
| DEMH | "Ein Doppelblatt aus einem Manichäischen Hymnenbuch (Maḥrnâmag)," F.W.K. Müller. |
| DF | *Divine Flashes,* Fakhruddin ʿIraqi, tr. W.C. Chittick & P.L. Wilson. |
| DFQM | *Dīwān ibn al-Fāriḍ,* ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī Sharaf al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim al-Miṣrī. |
| DG1–2 | *Dariyā Granthāvalī,* 2 vols., D.B. Shāstrī. |

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| DGG1–2 | *Dasam Sri Guru Granth Sāhib Jī,* 2 vols. |
| DH | *A Dictionary of Hinduism,* Margaret & James Stutley. |
| DHA | *Dīvān-i Khwājah Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī,* ed. Abū al-Qāsim Anjavī Shīrāzī. |
| DHHM | *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* Ḥājjī Malik Dīn Muḥammad & Sons, Lahore. |
| DHK1–2 | *Daoism Handbook,* 2 vols., ed. Livia Kohn. |
| DHM | *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* Malik Ghulām Muḥammad & Sons. |
| DHSG | *Dīvān-i Ḥakīm Sanā'ī Ghazanvī,* ed. Badīʿ al-Zamān Furūzānfar. |
| DHWC | *The Dīvān-i-Ḥāfiẓ,* 2 vols., tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke. |
| DIH | *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ,* ed. Qāzi Sajjād Ḥusayn. |
| DJH | *Dar Justjū-yī Ḥāfiẓ,* 2 vols., Raḥīm ź̧u al-Navvār. |
| DJRJ | *Dīvān-i Jāmī,* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan. |
| DKK | *Dīvān-i Kamāl al-Dīn Masʿūd-i Khujandī,* ed. ʿAzīz Dawlatābādī. |
| DKMR | *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist,* Hee-Jin Kim. |
| DL | *Divine Light,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| DLIH | *The Dalai Lamas,* Ardy Verhaegen. |
| DLSF | *Xenokrates: Darstellung der Lehre und Sammlung der Fragmente,* ed. R. Heinze. |
| DLTM | *The Dalai Lamas on Tantra,* tr. Glenn Mullin. |
| DM | *Discourses of Rumi,* tr. A.J. Arberry, adap. Doug Marman. |
| DMHS | *Dīvān-i Ḥājjī Mullā Hādī-yi Sabzavārī (Asrār),* ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riżā Dā'i-Javād. |
| DMK | *Dīvān-i Mushtāqīyah,* Muẓaffar ʿAlī Shāh Kirmānī, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh. |
| DMLW | *A Dictionary of the Maori Language,* Herbert Williams. |
| DMTC | *The Divine Milieu,* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, tr. Bernard Wall. |
| DNK1–5 | *Drops of Nectar,* 5 vols., tr. Andreas Kretschmar. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| DNKR | *Dīvān-i Ashʿār-i Nāṣir-i Khusraw Qubādiyānī,* ed. S.N.A. Taqvī. |
| DNMT | *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and Mystical Theology,* tr. C.E. Rolt. |
| DNTB | *Digha Nikaya,* tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| DNVS | *Digha Nikaya,* tr. Sister Vajira & Francis Story. |
| DOI | *A Dictionary of Islam,* T.P. Hughes. |
| DOL | *The Dawn of Light,* Maharaj Sawan Singh. |
| DP1–4 | *The Dialogues of Plato,* 4 vols., tr. B. Jowett. |
| DPMM | *The Dhammapada: A Collection of Verses,* tr. F. Max Müller. |
| DPN | *The Dhammapada,* Narada Thera. |
| DPR | *The Dhammapada,* tr. S Radhakrishnan. |
| DR | *The Divine Romance,* John Davidson. |
| DRA | *Discourses of Rūmī,* tr. & comm. A.J. Arberry. |
| DRB | *Douay-Rheims Bible,* tr. into English from the Latin Vulgate. |
| DSAE | *Dattatreya's Song of the Avadhut,* tr. Swami Abhayananda. |

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| DSJM | "Die Stellung Jesu im Manichäismus," E. Waldschmidt & W. Lentz. |
| DSM | *Discourses on Sant Mat,* Hazur Maharaj Sawan Singh. |
| DSMR | *Dīvān-i Kāmil-i Shams-i Maghribī,* Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī. |
| DSNS | *Dravya Sangraha,* Nemichandra Siddhantideva, tr. S.C. Ghoshal. |
| DSNV | *Dīvān-i Niʿmat Allāh Valī,* ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh. |
| DSSE | *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English,* Geza Vermes (1988). |
| DSSK | *Dariya Sahib: Saint of Bihar,* K.N. Upadhyaya. |
| DSSM | *The Dead Sea Scrolls,* Millar Burrows. |
| DSSU | *Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered,* Robert Eisenman & Michael Wise. |
| DSTR | *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz,* Rūmī. |
| DSZ | *The Divine Songs of Zarathustra,* I.J.S. Taraporewala. |
| DTDG | *Dohāvalī,* Tulsīdās. |
| DTL | *Die to Live,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| DVKS | *The Doctrine of Vibration,* Mark Dyczkowski. |
| DZ1–1487 | *Dàozàng,* refers to the *Zhèngtǒng dàozàng,* 1487 titles. |
| EAFC | *L'Égypte des Astrologues,* F. Cumont. |
| EB12 | *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite* (2012). |
| EBRB | *Encyclopedia of Buddhism,* 2 vols., ed. Robert Buswell. |
| ECMK | *Early Chinese Mysticism,* Livia Kohn. |
| ECTP | *Early Chinese Texts on Painting,* Susan Bush & Ilsio-yen Shih. |
| EDG1 | *The Endowment of Divine Grace and the Spread of Divine Mercy,* vol. 1, Abdul-Qādir Gilāni, tr. Muhammad M. al-Akili. |
| EDSB | *Early Daoist Scriptures,* Stephen Bokenkamp. |
| EDYF | *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga,* Georg Feuerstein. |
| EETH | *The Enchiridion,* Epictetus, tr. Thomas Higginson. |
| EGPW | *Nāgārjuna on the Six Perfections,* Ārya Nāgārjuna, tr. Bhikshu Dharmamitra. |
| EHTM | *The Emperor's Handbook,* tr. C. Scot Hicks & David Hicks. |
| EI1–12 | *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 12 vols., ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* |
| EIM | *Early Islamic Mysticism,* Michael Sells. |
| EJCD | *Encyclopedia Judaica,* CD-ROM. |
| EKAD | *Edicts of King Asoka,* tr. S. Dhammika. |
| EKD | *The Early Kabbalah,* Joseph Dan & Ronald Kiener. |
| ELCT | "The Eighteen Lohan of Chinese Buddhist Temples," T. Watters. |
| EMTK | *The English Mystical Tradition,* David Knowles. |
| EPR1–2 | *St Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan,* 2 vols., C.W. Mitchell, A. A. Bevan & F.C. Burkitt. |
| EREH | *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* 13 vols., James Hastings. |
| ESP1–2 | *An Encyclopedia of Shamanism,* 2 vols., Christina Pratt. |
| ET1–2 | *The Encyclopedia of Taoism,* 2 vols., ed. Fabrizio Pregadio. |
| ETCA | "The Excerpta ex Theodoto," R.P. Casey. |

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| ETTC | *Esoteric Tao Teh Ching,* Hua-Ching Ni. |
| FCWM | *Fools Crow: Wisdom and Power,* Thomas Mails. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| FFNA | *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād,* Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, Kvājah Amīr Ḥasan ʿAlā Sijzī, Khvājah Ḥasan Śānī Niẓāmī. |
| FJFC | *Five Játakas,* tr. V. Fausböll. |
| FKG | *The Feats of the Knowers of God,* Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-e Aflākī, tr. John O'Kane. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| FLI | *Farhang-i Lughāt va-Iṣṭilāḥāt va-Taʿbīrāt-i ʿIrfānī,* Sayyid Jaʿfar Sajjādī. |
| FLML | *The Fire of Love and The Mending of Life,* Richard Rolle, tr. Richard Misyn, ed. Frances Comper. |
| FLRR | *The Fire of Love,* Richard Rolle, tr. Clifton Wolters. |
| FMIA1–9 | *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah,* 9 vols., Ibn al-ʿArabī, ed. Aḥmad S. al-Dīn. |
| FMTL | *How to Free Your Mind,* Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron. |
| FN1–2 | *The Fihrist of al-Nadim,* 2 vols., tr. B. Dodge. |
| FNI1–15 | *Farhang-i Nūrbakhsh: Iṣṭilāḥāt-i Taṣawwuf,* 15 vols., Dr Javād Nūrbakhsh. |
| FOSC | *The Flower Ornament Scripture,* Thomas Cleary. |
| FRQJ | *Al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī,* Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī, ed. Shaykh Uns Mihrah. |
| FSC | *Four Sufi Classics,* tr. E. Fitzgerald, W.H.T. Gairdner & D. Pendlebury. |
| FSHM | *Pseudo-Macarius,* tr. George Maloney. |
| FTM | *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism,* Lama Anagarika Govinda. |
| G12A | *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles,* ed. & tr. J. Rendel Harris. |
| GBS1–12 | *The Golden Bough,* 12 vols., James Frazer. |
| GCI | *A Gallery of Chinese Immortals,* tr. Lionel Giles. |
| GCK | *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings,* tr. F.R.C. Bagley. |
| GDDS | *Gyān Dīpak,* Dariyā Sāhib. |
| GEIR | "Guanxiu and Exotic Imagery in Rakan Paintings," Masako Watanabe. |
| GEJD | *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der Juden in Frankreich und Deutschland, etc.,* Moritz Güdemann. |
| GFAJ | *George Fox: An Autobiography,* ed. Rufus Jones. |
| GFBA | *Ghazaliyāt-i Furūghī-yi Bisṭāmī,* ed. Manṣūr Mushfiq. |
| GGG | *From Glory to Glory,* ed. & tr. H. Musurillo. |
| GHZI | *The Gathas: The Hymns of Zarathushtra,* tr. D.J. Irani. |
| GIP | *The Graces of Interior Prayer,* A. Poulain, tr. L.L.Y. Smith. |
| GJ | *The Gospel of Jesus,* John Davidson. |
| GJB | *The Gnostic John the Baptizer,* G.R.S. Mead. |
| GKYB | *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphaṭa Yogīs,* G.W. Briggs. |
| GLH | *The Goad of Love,* Walter Hilton, tr. Clare Kirchberger. |

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| GLMT | *The Great Liberation (Mahānirvāna Tantra),* tr. Arthur Avalon. |
| GLTS | *The Golden Letters, etc.,* tr. John Reynolds. |
| GMAR | *Greek Mysteries,* ed. M.B. Cosmopoulos. |
| GMS | *Al-Ghazālī the Mystic,* Margaret Smith. |
| GMU | "Geburt und Entsendung des manichäischen Urmenschen," W.B. Henning. |
| GNP | *Saint Gregory Nazianzen: Selected Poems,* tr. John McGuckin. |
| GPM1–2 | *The Guide of the Perplexed,* 2 vols., Moses Maimonides, tr. Shlomo Pines. |
| GR1–2 | *Ghaṭ Rāmāyaṇ,* 2 vols., Tulsī Sāhib. |
| GRAC | *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical,* Walter Burkert. |
| GRG | *The Gulistan or Rose Garden of Sadi,* tr. Edward Rehatsek. |
| GRPS | *Guru Ravidas: The Philosopher's Stone,* K.N. Upadhyaya. |
| GRS | *Maśnavī-i Gulshan-i Rāz,* Maḥmūd Shabistarī, ed. A.M. Mullāyrī. |
| GRSS | *Gulshan-i Raz,* ed. & tr. E.H. Whinfield. |
| GS | *The Gnostic Scriptures,* Bentley Layton. |
| GSBM | *Ginzā der Schatz oder das Grosse Buch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski. |
| GSJ1–8 | *The Geography of Strabo,* 8 vols., ed. & tr. H.L. Jones. |
| GSL | The Gnostic Society Library, www.gnosis.org/library.html. |
| GSR | *Gnosis on the Silk Road,* tr. H-J. Klimkeit. |
| GST | *Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms,* ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshāni, tr. Nabil Safwat (English). |
| GSTA | *Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms,* ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, tr. Nabil Safwat (Arabic). |
| GSV | *Gheranda Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. |
| GT | *The Gospel of Truth,* K. Grobel. |
| GTBG | *God Talks with Arjuna,* Paramhansa Yogananda. |
| GTE1–3 | *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment,* 3 vols., Tsong-kha-pa, tr. Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee. |
| GVM | *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God,* G. Widengren. |
| GZAG | *A Guide to the Zohar,* Arthur Green. |
| HAG | *Hermetica,* ed. & tr. Walter Scott. |
| HAPJ | *History of Ancient Philosophy,* K.F. Johansen. |
| HAV1–2 | *The Hymns of the Atharvaveda,* 2 vols., Ralph Griffith. |
| HC | *The History of the Church,* Eusebius, tr. G.A. Williamson. |
| HCPF | *Heraclitus: The Complete Philosophical Fragments,* tr. W. Harris. |
| HCW | *Hadewijch: The Complete Works,* tr. Columba Hart. |
| HDAV | *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas,* A.L. Basham. |
| HDMG | *History and Doings of the Maoris,* Thomas Gudgeon. |
| HDSW | *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō,* tr. N. Waddell & Masao Abe. |
| HEDA | *The Hymns and Homilies of Ephraim the Syrian and the Demonstrations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage,* tr. J. Gwynn. |

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| HETI | "The Heart: The Eye and Temple of the Imaginal," Hugh Urban. |
| HFJD | *The Heart and the Fountain,* ed. Joseph Dan. |
| HGCH | *Hermetica,* tr. Brian Copenhaver. |
| HHG | *The First Book of the Ḥadīqatu'l-Ḥaqīqat,* tr. J. Stephenson (English). |
| HHGP | *The First Book of the Ḥadīqatu'l-Ḥaqīqat,* J. Stephenson (Persian). |
| HIKO | Hazrat Inayat Khan Study Database, www.hazrat-inayat-khan.org/. |
| HJAR | *A History of the Jains,* A.K. Roy. |
| HJBB | *A Handbook of Jainology,* Acharyadeo Shri Bhuvanbhanijsoorishwarji, tr. K. Ramappa. |
| HJP1–3 | *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ,* 3 vols., E. Schürer, rev., ed. & tr. G. Vermes *et al.* |
| HLT | *The History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler of Strasbourg,* tr. Susanna Winkworth. |
| HMEN | *The History of Music,* 5 vols., Emil Naumann, tr. F. Praeger. |
| HMJS | *From the Holy Mountain,* William Dalrymple. |
| HMTC | *The Heart of Matter,* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, tr. René Hague. |
| HMTD | *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951,* Melvyn Goldstein. |
| HMV | *W.B. Henning Memorial Volume,* ed. Mary Boyce & Ilya Gershevitch. |
| HP1 | *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* vol. 1, A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley. |
| HPIB | *A History of Prophecy in Israel,* Joseph Blenkinsopp. |
| HPPS | *The Heart of Prajna Paramita Sutra,* comm. Master Hsuan Hua, tr. Buddhist Text Translation Society. |
| HPSD | *Hathapradipika of Svatmarama,* ed. & tr. Swami Digambarji & Pt. Radhunathashastri Kokaje. |
| HPW | *Heraclitus,* P. Wheelwright. |
| HR2 | "Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan," F.W.K. Müller. |
| HRMC | *Hawaiian Religion & Magic,* Scott Cunningham. |
| HRV1–2 | *The Hymns of the Ṛgveda,* 2 vols., tr. R.T.H. Griffith. |
| HSB | *Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari,* tr. Muhsin Khan. |
| HSD | *Ḥadīth Sunun Abū Dāwūd.* |
| HSDM | *The Hunger of the Soul: A Spiritual Diary,* Nancy Mayorga. |
| HSL2 | *The Heritage of Sufism,* vol. 2, ed. Leonard Lewisohn. |
| HSM | *Hadith Sahih Muslim,* tr. Abdul Hamid Siddiqui. |
| HSTM | *The Hymns of Śaṅkara,* T.M.P. Mahadevan. |
| HTBS | *Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols,* Robert Beer. |
| HVP | *Commentary of Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras,* A. Dacier, tr. N. Rowe. |
| HWW1–2 | *Hindu World,* 2 vols., Benjamin Walker. |
| HYP | *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* tr. Pancham Sinh. |

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| HYPM | *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Swami Muktibodhananda & Swami Satyananda Saraswati. |
| HYY | *Harmonizing Yin and Yang,* tr. Eva Wong. |
| IABW | *Ibn al-ʿArabi: The Bezels of Wisdom,* tr. R.W.J. Austin. |
| IBTH | *An Introduction to Buddhism,* Peter Harvey. |
| IC | *The Imitation of Christ,* Thomas à Kempis, tr. R. Whitford (*c.*1530), ed. Harold Gardiner. |
| ICTK | *The Imitation of Christ,* Thomas à Kempis, tr. Leo Sherley Price. |
| ID | *Icanchu's Drum,* Lawrence Sullivan. |
| IDL | *Introduction to the Devout Life,* Francis de Sales, tr. M. Day. |
| IEHO | "Introduction to R. Hayim Vital and his Treatise *Etz Hayim* (and to) the *Shaʿar haHaqdamot,*" tr. M. Kallus & B. Ogren. |
| IEZB | *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Zen Buddhism,* Helen Baroni. |
| IIAS39 | *Newsletter 39* (December 2005), International Institute for Asian Studies. |
| IJCS | *All-India Jain Chaturmas Suchi,* ed. Babulal Jain Ujjwal. |
| IKJ | *Al-Insān al-Kāmil,* al-Jīlī, ed. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayālī. |
| IKM | *Al-Insān al-Kāmil,* al-Jīlī (Cairo, 1886). |
| IKMH | *An Introduction to the Kabbalah,* Moshe Hallamish, tr. Ruth Bar-Ilan & Ora Wiskind-Elper. |
| ILBT | *An Introduction into Lamaism,* R.P. Anuruddha. |
| IMCK | *Inscriptions mandaïtes des coupes de Khouabir,* H. Pognon. |
| IMRI | *An Introduction to Maori Religion,* James Irwin. |
| IP1–2 | *Indian Philosophy,* 2 vols., S. Radhakrishnan. |
| IPEC | *Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment,* Tenzin Gyatso, tr. Geshe Thupten Jinpa. |
| IRS1–2 | *Igrot ha-Rambam,* 2 vols., Moses Maimonides, ed. Isaac Shailat. |
| ISA | *Al-Itḥāfāt al-Sanīyah bī al-Aḥādīth al-Qudsīyah,* ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī, ed. Muḥammad ʿAfīf al-Zuʿbī. |
| ISAA | *Imrei Shefer,* Abraham Abulafia, Ms. Paris BN777. |
| ISC | *Immortal Sisters,* ed. & tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| ISMA | *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī (Muʿajam Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyah),* ed. Bassām ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī. |
| ISSG | *The Indian Song of Songs,* tr. Edwin Arnold. |
| ISWW | *In Search of the Way,* Flora Wood. |
| ITCT | *Illustrated Tirthankar Charitra,* ed. Shri Amar Muni *et al.* |
| ITSL | *An Introduction to the Tamil Siddhas,* Layne Little. |
| IUDG1–5 | *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn,* 5 vols., Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, ed. ʿAllāmah Zīn al-Dīn Abī al-Faḍl al-ʿIrāqī. |
| IVRS | *Iboga: The Visionary Root of African Shamanism,* Vincent Ravalec, Mallendi & Agnès Paicheler. |
| J1–10 | *Josephus,* 10 vols., tr. H. Thackeray *et al.* |
| JA | *Joseph and Asenath,* E.W. Brooks. |

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| JADM | *The Jain Agams,* D. Malvania, tr. Nagin Shah. |
| JB | *The Jerusalem Bible* (1966). See *Acknowledgements.* |
| JBLB | *Jainism in Buddhist Literature,* Bhagchandra Jain Bhaskar. |
| JCL | *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* in *Judaic Classics Library.* See *Acknowledgements.* |
| JCW | *Josephus: His Complete Works,* tr. W. Whiston. |
| JDED | *Josephus' Description of the Essenes,* Todd Beall. |
| JE | JewishEncyclopaedia, www.jewishencyclopedia.com. |
| JEDS | *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary,* Daito Shuppansha. |
| JEMS | *The Jade Emperor's Mind Seal Classic,* tr. Stuart Olson. |
| JGF1–2 | *Journal of George Fox,* 2 vols., ann. Wilson Armistead. |
| JGFN | *The Journal of George Fox,* ed. John Nickalls. |
| JH1–108 | *Dàozàng jīnghuá,* 108 titles. |
| JLPR | *The Jew in the Lotus,* Rodger Kamenetz. |
| JM | *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (German). |
| JMAL | "Jewish Mysticism Among the Jews of Arab/Moslem Lands," Moshe Idel. |
| JMH1–3 | *Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr,* 3 vols., comp. Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Bakr Suyūṭī, ed. Ḥasan Zarruq *et al.* |
| JMHL | *The Jewish Messiahs,* Harris Lenowitz. |
| JMKS | *Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah,* ed. Frederick Greenspahn. |
| JMM | *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer,* M. Lidzbarski (Mandaean). |
| JMT | *The Jewish Mystical Tradition,* Ben Zion Bokser. |
| JOLG | *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation by sGam.po.pa,* tr. & ann. Herbert Guenther. |
| JOLK | *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation,* Gampopa, tr. Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche. |
| JPGF | *Joyful Path of Good Fortune,* Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. |
| JPP1–2 | *Jain Philosophy and Practice,* 2 vols., comp. Jaina Education Committee. |
| JPPB | *Some Types of Jewish-Palestinian Piety from 70 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.,* Adolph Büchler. |
| JPPR | *Jaina Perspective in Philosophy and Religion,* Ramjee Singh. |
| JPRN | *Jaina Philosophy and Religion,* tr. Nagin J. Shah. |
| JPSZ | *The Journal of the Polynesian Society.* |
| JRAV | "Jina Ṛṣabha as an 'Avatāra' of Viṣṇu," Padmanabh S. Jaini. |
| JSB1–2 | *Jagjīvan Sāhib kī Bānī,* 2 vols. |
| JSBB1–7 | *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births,* 7 vols., ed. E.B Cowells. |
| JSSM | *Journal for the Study of Sephardic & Mizrahi Jewry,* ed. Z. Zohar. |
| JTPB | *Jain Theory of Perception,* Pushpa Bothra. |
| JVLK | *Jaina View of Life,* T.G. Kalghati. |
| JWW | *The Jewish War,* Josephus, tr. G.A. Williamson. |

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| KA1–10 | *Kashf al-Asrār va-ʿUddat al-Abrār,* 10 vols., Abū al-Faẓl Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, ed. ʿAlī Aṣghar Ḥikmat. |
| KAJD | *Avesta: Khorda Avesta,* tr. James Darmesteter. |
| KB | *The Jerusalem Bible,* English text rev. & ed. Harold Fisch. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| KBS | *Kullīyāt-i Bulleh Shāh,* Faqīr Muḥammad. |
| KBSA | *Kalām-i Bulleh Shāh,* ed. Naźīr Aḥmad. |
| KCN | *Kahuna Class Notes,* David 'Daddy' Bray. |
| KDA | *Keshavdās Jī kī Amīghūnt.* |
| KDRM | *Al-Kawākib al-Durrīyah fī Tarājim al-Sādah al-Ṣūfīyah,* ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī. |
| KDT1–2 | *Al-Kawākib al-Durriyyah fī Tarājim al-Sādah al-Ṣūfiyyah,* 2 vols., al-Munāwi, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mizyadi. |
| KF | *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* al-Nadīm, ed. G. Flügel. |
| KFF | *Kitāb Fīhi mā Fīhi,* Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, ed. B. Furūzānfar. |
| KG | *Kabīr Granthāvalī,* ed. Shyām Sundardās. |
| KGCS | *Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism,* John Renard. |
| KGME | *Kabir: The Great Mystic,* I.A. Ezekiel. |
| KHH | *Kunūz al-Ḥaqāʾiq (fi Ḥadīth Khayr al-Khalāʾiq*), 2 vols., comp. ʿAbd al-Raʿūf Manāwī. |
| KHI | *Kullīyāt-i Shaykh Fakhr al-dīn Ibrāhīm Hamadānī ʿIrāqī,* ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī. |
| KIFT1–4 | *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn,* 4 vols., al-Tahānawī, ed. A.H. Basaj. |
| KJV | *The Bible: The Authorized (King James) Version.* See *Acknowledgements.* |
| KLRM | *The Kāhuna: Versatile Masters of Old Hawai'i,* Likeke McBride. |
| KLTA | *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf,* Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, ed. R.A. Nicholson (Arabic). |
| KM | *Kashf al-Mahjūb,* al-Hujwīrī, ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. |
| KMA1–4 | *Kitāb al-Mawāʿiẓ wa al-Iʿtibār bi Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa al-Āthār,* 4 vols., Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maqrīzī. |
| KMM | *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* Hujwīrī, ed. V.A. Zhukovsky. |
| KMOZ | *Kol Mevaser ve-Omer,* M. Zelikson. |
| KNAO | *Khuddaka Nikaya,* tr. Andrew Olendzki. |
| KNJI | *Khuddaka Nikaya,* tr. John Ireland. |
| KNLG | *Kullīyāt,* Bhāʾī Nand Lāl Goyā, ed. Gandā Singh. |
| KNTB | *Khuddaka Nikaya,* tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| KODW | *Kingitanga,* Mitaki Ra. |
| KOT | *The Kephalaia of the Teacher,* Iain Gardner. |
| KPA | *The Koran: With a Parallel Arabic Text,* tr. N.J. Dawood. |
| KPAC | *Kahuna Power,* Timothy Beckley. |
| KPT1–2 | *The Kūrma-Purāṇa,* 2 parts, tr. G.V. Tagare. |
| KSA | *Akhrāvatī: Kabīr Sahab kā Pūrā Granth.* |

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| KSB | *Kabīr Sāhib kā Bījak.* |
| KSD1–10 | *Kullīyāt-i Shams yā Dīvān-i Kabīr,* 10 vols., ed. B. Furūzānfar. |
| KSMF | *Kullīyāt-i Saʿdī,* Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Saʿdi, ed. M.A. Foroughi. |
| KSMN | *Kullīyāt-i Ṣā'ib,* Ṣā'ib Tabrīzī. |
| KSS | *Kabīr Sākhī Sangrah.* |
| KSS1–4 | *Kabīr Sāhib kī Shabdāvalī,* 4 vols. |
| KSSB | *Kabīr Sāgar: Sumiran Bodh,* comp. Swāmī Shrī Yugalānanda. |
| KSSL | *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme,* Swami Lakshman Jee. |
| KSSS | *Kullīyāt-i Saʿdī,* Shaykh Muṣliḥ Dīn Saʿdī Shīrazī. |
| KSTK | *Khulāṣah-'i Sharḥ-i Taʿarruf,* ed. Aḥmad ʿAlī Rajā'ī. |
| KTA | *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt,* al-Jurjānī, ed. I. al-Ābyārī. |
| KTAA | *Kulārṇava Tantra,* Arthur Avalon, readings M.P. Pandit. |
| KTJ | *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt,* al-Jurjānī, ed. ʿĀdil Anwar Khiḍr. |
| KTL | *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion,* G. Widengren. |
| KTMH | *Kitâb al-Tawâsîn,* Manṣoûr al-Ḥallâj, ed. & tr. Louis Massignon. |
| KTS | *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah,* Sulamī, ed. Johannes Pedersen. |
| KWGK | *The Karmapa: Official Website of the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa.* |
| KWGN | *Kabir: The Weaver of God's Name,* V.K. Sethi. |
| LABN | "The 18 Lohans (Arhats)," unattributed. |
| LAT1–2 | *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana,* 2 vols., tr. F.C. Conybeare. |
| LBBN | *The Life of the Buddha,* tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. |
| LBDF | *As Light Before Dawn,* Eitan Fishbane. |
| LBFD | *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma,* tr. L. Hurvitz. |
| LBHR | *Living Banaras,* ed. Bradley Hertel & Cynthia Humes. |
| LDAC | *The Ladder of Divine Ascent,* John Klimakos, tr. Archimandrite Lazarus. |
| LDT | *Letters of Direction,* Abbé de Tourville, tr. Lucy Menzies. |
| LG | *La Literatura de los Guaraníes,* León Cádogan. |
| LGFS | *The Love of God,* Saint Francis de Sales, tr. Vincent Kerns. |
| LGMD | *Laṭīfah-'i Ghaybī,* Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Dārābī. |
| LLSS | *A Study of the Language of Love in the Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Poetry,* J.B. White. |
| LMMM | *Letters of Maimonides,* Moses Maimonides, tr. Leon Stitskin. |
| LMTB | "The Legend of Mahu and Taewha," Elsdon Best. |
| LMTH | *The Life of Marpa the Translator,* Tsang Nyön Heruka, tr. Chögyam Trugpa *et al.* |
| LMTT | *The Life of Milarepa,* Lobsang P. Lhalungpa. |
| LOEP | *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* Diogenēs Laertius, tr. C.D. Yonge. |
| LOSM | *Light on Sant Mat,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| LPD | *A Letter of Private Direction and Other Treatises* (1981). |

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| LPH | *The Ladder of Perfection,* Walter Hilton, tr. Leo Sherley Price. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| LPSW | "Leadership in Pre-European Maori Society," Maharaia Winiata. |
| LSGR | *The Lotus Sutra,* tr. Gene Reeves. |
| LSHK | *The Saddharma-Pundarîka,* tr. H. Kern. |
| LSMC | *Light on Saint Matthew,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| LSMH | "Lower (Second?) Section of the Manichaean Hymns," tr. T. Chi. |
| LSMT | *The Lankavatara Sutra,* tr. D.T. Suzuki. |
| LSOC | *The Lotus Sutra and Its Opening and Closing Sutras,* tr. Burton Watson. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| LTJG | *The Living Talmud,* Judah Goldin. |
| LTS | *Lawā'iḥ,* ʿAbd-ur-Raḥmān Jāmī, tr. E.H. Whinfield & Mīrzā M. Ḳazvīnī (English). |
| LTSP | *Lawā'iḥ,* ʿAbd-ur-Raḥmān Jāmī, tr. E.H. Whinfield & Mīrzā M. Ḳazvīnī (Persian). |
| LWKT | *The Lore of the Whare-wānanga,* Te Matorohanga, tr. S.P. Smith. |
| LXX | *The Septuagint,* C3rd–2nd BCE (Greek). |
| M1– | *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichaean Script in the German Turfan Collection,* Mary Boyce. |
| MA | *The Master Answers,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| MAA | "The Mythological Acts of the Apostles," A.S. Lewis. |
| MAFG | *Majmūʿah-'i Āśar-i Fārsī,* Aḥmad Ghazālī, ed. Aḥmad Mujāhid. |
| MAG | *Mishkāt al-Anwār,* al-Ghazālī. |
| MARB | *Mashrab al-Arwāḥ,* Rūzbihān Baqlī, ed. ʿĀsim Ibrāhim al-Kayālī. |
| MASA1–2 | *Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn,* 2 vols., al-Aflākī al-ʿĀrifī, ed. Taḥsīn Yāzījī. |
| MBB | *Ein Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch,* W.B. Henning. |
| MBDF | *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations,* Paul Williams. |
| MBN | *The Most Beautiful Names,* comp. Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti. |
| MBS | *Mīrābāī kī Shabdāvalī.* |
| MBST | *Bon-zo-Kan-Wa shi-yaku tai ko (Mahāvyutpatti),* 2 vols, ed. Ryōzaburō Sakaki. |
| MCLM | *Manu's Code of Law,* Patrick Olivelle. |
| MDB | *Malūkdās Jī kī Bānī.* |
| MDBB | *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha,* tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, ed. & rev. Bhikkhu Bodhi. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| MDI | *Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* Annemarie Schimmel. |
| MDLS | *Mira: The Divine Lover,* V.K. Sethi. |
| MDT | "Manichäische Dogmatik aus chinesischen und iranischen Texten," E. Waldschmidt & W. Lentz. |
| MEAA | *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia,* Moshe Idel. |

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| MEM | "Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism," G. Widengren. |
| MF | *Mani,* G. Flügel. |
| MG1–15 | *Mahābhārata,* 15 vols., tr. multiple, Clay Sanskrit Library. |
| MGK | *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran,* Marmaduke Pickthall. |
| MH | "Ein Manichäisches Henochbuch," W.B. Henning. |
| MHCP | *The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian,* tr. M. Boyce. |
| MHJC | *The Mystic Heart of Judaism,* Miriam Caravella. |
| MHK | *Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah,* ʿIzz al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qāshānī, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humāʾī. |
| MHM | *Maṣāʾib-i Ḥallāj,* Louis Massignon. |
| MHN | *Morals for the Heart,* tr. Bruce Lawrence. |
| MHVA | *Mahāvastu-Avadāna,* 3 vols., ed. Émile Senart. |
| MIO | *Mitteillungen de Instituts für Orientforschung,* multiple vols. |
| MIMM | *Mirṣād al-ʿIbād min al-Mabdaʾ ilā al-Maʿād,* Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāyah, ed. Muḥammad Riyāḥī. |
| MJR1–8 | *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī,* 8 vols., ed., tr. & comm. R.A. Nicholson. |
| MKAK | *Meditation and the Kabbalah,* Aryeh Kaplan. |
| ML | *Manichaean Literature,* J.P. Asmussen. |
| MLA | *Monastic Letters of Saint Athanasius the Great,* tr. L. Barnard. |
| MLRE | *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire,* S.N.C. Lieu. |
| MM | *Mani and Manichaeism,* G. Widengren. |
| MM1–3 | "Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan," 3 vols., F.C. Andreas & W.B. Henning. |
| MMA | *Monk of Mount Athos,* Archimandrite Sophrony, tr. R. Edmonds. |
| MMJA | *Muḥammad ibn Abī Jumhūr Aḥsāʾī al-Mujlī,* ed. Aḥmad Shīrāzī. |
| MMP | "On Mithra in the Manichaean Pantheon," M. Boyce. |
| MMS | *Sri Guru Granth Sahib,* 8 vols., tr. Manmohan Singh. |
| MMSI | "Moses Maimonides and the Sufis of Islam," Tom Block. |
| MMSY | *Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra,* tr. Kosho Yamamoto, ed. Tony Page (2007). |
| MMVP | "Metaphors in Maori Vocabulary and Traditional Poetry," Viktor Krupa. |
| MNFA | *Muṣībāt Nāmah,* Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār Nīshābūrī, ed. Nūrānī Viṣāl. |
| MNNB | *Majjhima Nikaya,* tr. Nanamoli Thera & Bhikkhu Bodhi. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| MNNP | *Majjhima Nikaya,* tr. Nyanaponika Thera. |
| MNPT | *Majjhima Nikaya,* tr. Piyadassi Thera. |
| MNTB | *Majjhima Nikaya,* tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| MOHE | *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism,* Rachel Elior. |
| MOI | *The Mystics of Islam,* R.A. Nicholson. |
| MOT | *Manuscrits Ouïgours du IXe–Xe siècle de Touen-Houang,* 2 vols., ed., tr. & comm. James Hamilton. |

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| MP1–2 | *Mystical Poems of Rumi,* 2 vols., tr. A.J. Arberry. |
| MPAS | "Maori Personifications," Elsdon Best. |
| MPB | *A Manichaean Psalm-Book,* Part II, ed. & tr. C.R.C. Allberry. |
| MPM | *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische und Parabeltexte der Manichäer,* Werner Sundermann. |
| MPSA | *Matsya Purāṇa, A Study,* Vasudeva Agrawala. |
| MRG | "Maori Religion," Walter Gudgeon. |
| MRG1–7 | *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil (Collection of Letters),* 7 vols., al-Ghazālī. |
| MRJA | "Maori Religion," Johannes Andersen. |
| MRM1–2 | *Maori Religion and Mythology,* 2 parts, Elsdon Best. |
| MRS1–6 | *Mahābhārata,* 6 vols., tr. Ramnarayandatta Shastri Pandeya. |
| MRSY | "The Siddha," Paul Muller-Ortega. |
| MSAN | *Maśnavīhā-yi Sanāʾī,* ed. ʿAbd al-Rażā Sayf & Ghulām Ḥusayn. |
| MSAS | *Manāhil al-Ṣafāʾ fī Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Shifāʾ,* al-Suyūṭī. |
| MSDN | *Manu Samhita,* tr. M.N. Dutt. |
| MSEA | *Milei di-Shemaya,* Eleʿazar Azikri, ed. Mordechai Pachter. |
| MSGK | *Music in the Sky,* Michele Martin. |
| MSK | *Maqālāt-i Shams,* Aḥmad Khushnawīs. |
| MSLB | *The Maori School of Learning,* Elsdon Best. |
| MSM | *Muslim Saints and Mystics,* Farid al-Din Attar, tr. A.J. Arberry. |
| MSPP | *Mysticism and the Spiritual Path,* Lekh Raj Puri. |
| MSS | *Mīrā Sudhā Sindhu.* |
| MTAN | *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr, Shaykh ʿAṭṭār Nīshābūrī,* ed. Muḥammad Rażā Shafāʿī Kadkanī. |
| MTGS | *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* Gershom Scholem. |
| MTIN | *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh,* tr. A.J. Wensinck. |
| MTP | "The Manichaean-Turkic Pothi-Book," L.V. Clark. |
| MTSB | *Midrash Tanḥuma,* ed. Solomon Buber. |
| MTTL | *Mahānirvāna Tantra,* tr. & comm. Arthur Avalon. |
| MUM | *Minor Upanishads,* tr. Swami Madhavananda. |
| MUSV | *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad,* tr. Swāmī Vimalānanda. |
| MV1–12 | *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa,* 12 vols., tr. Kisari Mohan Ganguli. |
| MVJ1–3 | *The Mahāvastu,* 3 vols., tr. J. J. Jones. |
| MVOS | *Many Voices, One Song,* Judith Sankaranarayan. |
| MYPJ | *The Path of the Just,* Moshe Chayim Luzzatto, tr. S. Silverstein. |
| MYPU | *Mesillat Yesharim,* Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, tr. Mordecai Kaplan. |
| MZBS | *Manual of Zen Buddhism,* D.T. Suzuki. |
| NAKU | *Niyamasara,* Shri Kunda Kunda Āchārya, ed. & tr. Uggar Sain. |
| NARB | *Native American Religion,* Nancy Bonvillain. |
| NAS | *Nuskhah-ʾi Aḥwāl-i Shāhī,* Tawakkul Beg Kulalī. |
| NAWB | "Notes on the Art of War, *etc.*" Elsdon Best. |
| NBA1–26 | *Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles,* 26 vols. |

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| NBST | *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras,* Swāmī Tyāgīśānanda. |
| NDBB | *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha,* tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| NEA | *Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle,* tr. William Ross. |
| NEB | *The New English Bible.* |
| NEI | *The New Encyclopedia of Islam,* Cyril Glassé. |
| NEL | *Nourishing the Essence of Life,* tr. Eva Wong. |
| NHL | *The Nag Hammadi Library in English,* ed. James Robinson. |
| NHS11 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XI, ed. Douglas Parrott. |
| NHS15 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XV, ed. Birger Pearson. |
| NHS20 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XX, vol. 1, ed. Bentley Layton. |
| NHS21 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXI, vol. 2, ed. Bentley Layton. |
| NHS22 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXII, vol. 1, ed. Harold Attridge. |
| NHS26 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVI, ed. Stephen Emmel. |
| NHS27 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVII, ed. Douglas Parrott. |
| NHS28 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXVIII, ed. Charles Hedrick. |
| NHS30 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXX, ed. Birger Pearson. |
| NHS31 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXI, ed. John Sieber. |
| NHS33 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* XXXIII, ed. M. Waldstein & F. Wisse. |
| NHS4 | *Nag Hammadi Studies* IV, ed. A. Böhlig & F. Wisse. |
| NHSM | *Nag Hammadi Scriptures,* ed. Marvin Meyer. |
| NIV | *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* |
| NJB | *The New Jerusalem Bible* (1985). See *Acknowledgements.* |
| NKD | *Nāṣir-i Khusraw,* tr. P.L. Wilson & G.R. Aavani. |
| NKK1–2 | *Nānā I Ke Kumu,* 2 vols., Mary Kawena Pukui *et al.* |
| NKTF | *Nuṣūṣ al-Khuṣūṣ fi Tarjamah al-Fuṣūṣ,* Rukn al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Shīrāzī. |
| NLSI | *Nine Lives,* William Dalrymple. |
| NMCC | "Nestorians and Manichaeans on the South China Coast," S. Lieu. |
| NN | *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ fī Sharḥ Naqsh al-Fuṣūṣ,* Jāmī, ed. W. Chittick. |
| NPII1–14 | *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Series 2, 14 vols., ed. P. Schaff & H. Wace. |
| NR1–2 | *The Nestorians and Their Rituals,* 2 vols., G.P. Badger. |
| NTA1–2 | *New Testament Apocrypha,* 2 vols., E. Hennecke, tr. R.McL. Wilson, ed. W. Schneemelcher. |
| NUJ | *Nafaḥāt al-Uns,* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, ed. Mahdī Tawhīdīpūr. |
| OCM | *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition,* A. Louth. |
| ODB | *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism,* Damien Keown. |
| OEGG | *ʾOtzar ʿEden Ganuz,* Abraham Abulafia. |
| OFP | *Origen on First Principles,* tr. G.W. Butterworth. |
| OG | *The Other Gospels,* ed. R. Cameron. |
| OHIA | *Oẓar Ḥayyim,* Isaac ben Samuel of Akko. |
| OKGS | *Origins of the Kabbalah,* Gershom Scholem, tr. Allan Arkush. |

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| OMBS | *Outlines of Mahâyâna Buddhism,* D.T. Suzuki. |
| OPJ | *On the Prayer of Jesus,* Ignatius Brianchaninov, tr. Father Lazarus. |
| OSD | *The Odes of Solomon,* John Davidson. |
| OSDP | *Œuvres spirituelles,* Diadoque de Photicé, tr. Édouard des Places. |
| OSS | *Origen: The Song of Songs,* tr. R.P. Lawson. |
| OSSO1–6 | *Opera Jacobi Alvarez de Paz,* 6 vols., Diego Álvarez de Paz. |
| OSSS | *The Odes of Sheikh Muṣlihu-d-Dīn Saʿdī Shīrāzī,* Part I *(Ṭayyibāt),* ed. Lucas White King. |
| OTFN | *Once upon a Future Time,* Jan Nattier. |
| OTP1–2 | *The Old Testament Pseudoepigrapha,* 2 vols., ed. J.H. Charlesworth. |
| OWKG | "The Occupation of Wounded Knee," Tom Gillen. |
| OWR | *Overview of World Religions,* www.philtar.ac.uk. |
| PAC1–2 | *The Philosophers,* 2 parts, T.A. Richman. |
| PAH | "Some Parthian Abecedarian Hymns," M. Boyce. |
| PAKU | *Pravachansara,* Acharya Kundkund, tr. A.N. Upadhye. |
| PAS | *8 Chapters on Perfection & Angels' Song,* Walter Hilton, tr. Rosemary Dorward. |
| PB | *The Prayer Book,* tr. Ben Zion Bokser. |
| PBD | *Buddhist Dictionary,* Ven. Nyanatiloka. |
| PBH | *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse,* ed. T. Carmi. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| PCCV | *Play of Consciousness,* Swami Muktananda. |
| PCT1–5 | *The Philokalia,* 4 vols., ed. & tr. G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, Kallistos Ware. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| PCTF | "Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine," 2 parts, tr. & ann. E. Chavannes & P. Pelliot. |
| PCW1–10 | *Philo,* 10 vols., tr. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker. |
| PCWF | *The Pilgrim Continues His Way,* tr. R.M. French. |
| PDB | *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism,* R. Buswell & D. Lopez. |
| PDPM | *The Path of Discrimination,* tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. |
| PEA | *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, etc.,* tr. H.N. Fowler. |
| PEC | *Plotinus (The Enneads),* tr. Stephen MacKenna. |
| PELS | *Philostratus and Eunapius,* tr. W.C. Wright. |
| PEP | *Plotinus: The Enneads,* tr. Stephen MacKenna, abr. John Dillon. |
| PES | *Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis,* tr. F. Williams. |
| PG1–161 | *Patrologiae cursus completus . . . Series Graeca,* 161 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne. |
| PGBO | *The Path of God's Bondsmen from Origin to Return,* tr. H. Algar. |
| PHI | *Prayer and Holiness,* Dumitru Staniloae. |
| PLEK | *Peering through the Lattices,* Ephraim Kanarfogel. |
| PMA | *The Persian Mystics: Ansāri of Herat,* Jogendra Singh. |
| PMAH | *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-ʿArabi,* Abdul Qadir Husaini. |

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| PMB1–15 | *Plutarch's Moralia,* 15 vols., tr. F.C. Babbitt *et al.* |
| PMS1–5 | *Philosophy of the Masters,* 5 vols., Huzur Maharaj Sawan Singh. |
| PNA | *Pandnāmah,* Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, ed. S. de Sacy. |
| PNC | *A Pair of Naṣoraean Commentaries,* tr. E.S. Drower. |
| PNW | *The Power of the Name,* Kallistos Ware. |
| POM | *The Path of the Masters,* Julian Johnson. |
| PPD1–10 | *The Padma Purāṇa,* 10 vols., tr. N.A. Deshpande. |
| PPGL | *The Practice of the Presence of God,* Joseph de Beaufort. |
| PPHS | *The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra,* comm. Grand Master T'an Hsu, tr. Master Lok To. |
| PPL | *Plato: Phaedrus and Letters VII and VIII,* tr. Walter Hamilton. |
| PPPS | "Peace Parsha," Fred Scherlinder Dobb. |
| PPVM | *The Path of Purification,* Buddhaghosa, tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. |
| PS | *Pistis Sophia,* tr. Violet MacDermot. |
| PSB1–3 | *Paltū Sāhib kī Bānī,* 3 vols. |
| PSGG | *Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel,* G.R.S. Mead. |
| PSHC | *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos,* Lawrence Fine. |
| PSLP | *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library,* comp. & tr. K.S. Guthrie, tr. Thomas Taylor & Arthur Fairbanks. |
| PSSL | *The Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra,* tr. Paul Harrison. |
| PSW | *The Prodigal Soul,* John Davidson. |
| PTMR | *Perush ʿal ha-Torah,* Menaḥem Recanati. |
| PTSA1–6 | *The Aṅguttara-nikāya,* 6 vols., ed. R. Morris & E. Hardy. |
| PTSD1–3 | *The Dīgha-nikāya,* 3 vols., ed. T.W. Rhys Davids & J.E. Carpenter. |
| PTSDA1–5 | *The Commentary on the Dhammapada,* 5 vols., ed. H.C. Norman & H. Smith. |
| PTSI | *Itivuttaka,* ed. E. Windisch. |
| PTSJ1–8 | *Jātaka with Commentary,* 8 vols., ed. V. Fausbøll. |
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| PTSP | *Puggala-paññati,* ed. R. Morris, and *Puggala-paññatti-atthakathā,* ed. G. Landsberg & C.A.F. Rhys Davids. |
| PTSP1–2 | *Paṭisambhidāmagga,* 2 vols., ed. A.C. Taylor. |
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| PTSS1–6 | *Samyutta-nikāya,* 6 vols., ed. L. Feer. |
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| PTSV1–5 | *Vinaya-piṭaka,* 5 vols., ed. H. Oldenberg. |
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| PU | *The Principal Upaniṣads,* tr. S. Radhakrishnan. |
| PUSS | *The Principal Upanishads,* tr. Sri Swami Sivananda. |

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| PWLS | *Philosophy as a Way of Life,* Pierre Hadot, tr. M. Chase. |
| PZGS | *Pòmí zhēngdào gē,* Zhōnglí Quán, *DZ270,* tr. Silfong Tsun. |
| QMS | *Quánzhōu mínshèng gǔjī* ('Quánzhōu Attractions'). |
| QTG | *Al-Qaṣīdat al-Ta'iyyah,* al-Ghazālī. |
| QZD | *Quánzhōu zōngjiào shíkè,* Wú Wénliáng. |
| RAH | *Refutation of All Heresies,* Hippolytus, tr. S.D.F. Salmond. |
| RAIH | *The Religions of the American Indians,* Åke Hultkrantz, tr. Monica Setterwall. |
| RASA | *Rawḥ al-Arwāḥ fī Sharḥ Asmā' al-Malik al-Fattāḥ,* Aḥmad Samʿānī, ed. M. Hirawī. |
| RBDS | *Refuge,* Thanissaro Bhikkhu. |
| RBJS | *Relics of the Buddha,* John Strong. |
| RBLG | *Rebuilding Buddhism,* Sarah LeVine & David Gellner. |
| RBOL | "Revival of the Bhikkhuni Order in Sri Lanka," D.A. Weeraratne. |
| RCML | *Śrī Rāmacaritamānasa,* Tulasīdāsa. |
| RD | *Ravidās Darshan,* ed. Achārya Prithvī Singh Āzād. |
| RDL | *Revelations of Divine Love,* Julian of Norwich, tr. C. Wolters. |
| RDSS | *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls,* Lawrence Schiffman. |
| RIS | *Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad,* ed. & tr. Fażl Maḥmūd Asīrī (English). |
| RISP | *Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad,* ed. & tr. Fażl Maḥmūd Asīrī (Persian). |
| RKA | *Rashf al-Alḥāz fī Kashf al-Alfāz,* Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥusayn ibn Ulfatī Tabrīzī, ed. Māyil-i Hiravī. |
| RLI | *Risālah-yi Lamaʿāt va-Risālah-yi Iṣṭilāḥāt,* Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī. |
| RLRI | *Risālah-'i Lamʿāt va Risālah-'i Iṣṭilaḥāt,* Fakhr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ʿIrāqī, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh. |
| RLRS | *The Record of Linji,* tr. R.F. Sasaki, ed. T.Y. Kirchner. |
| RM | *Rabiʿa the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islam,* M. Smith. |
| RMHL | *Rabbi Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto u-Venei Doro: Osef Iggerot u-te´udot,* 2 vols., Simon Ginzburg. |
| RMI | *Readings from the Mystics of Islam,* Margaret Smith. |
| RMM | *The Revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg,* tr. L. Menzies. |
| RMP | *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian,* Mary Boyce. |
| RNV1–4 | *Rasā'il Shāh Niʿmatullāhī Valī,* 4 vols., ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh. |
| RPJG | *Religion and Philosophy of the Jainas,* V.R. Gandhi, ed. Nagin J. Shah. |
| RPSJ | *Reality: Tr. of Shri Pujyapada's Sarvarthasiddhi,* tr. S.A. Jain. |
| RPTT | *Rabad of Posquières,* Isadore Twersky. |
| RQQQ | *Al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah,* Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī. |
| RQR | *Risālat al-Quds wa Risālah Ghalaṭāt al-Sālikīn,* Rūzbihān Baqlī Shīrāzī, ed. Javād Nūrbakhsh. |

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| RRS | *The Revival of Religious Sciences,* al-Ghazāli, tr. Bankey Behari. |
| RSTS | *Ratna Sāgar,* Tulsī Sāhib. |
| RSV | *The Holy Bible: The Revised Standard Version* (1952). |
| RTG | *Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn,* Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. |
| RTGT | *The Religions of Tibet,* Giuseppe Tucci, tr. Geoffrey Samuel. |
| RTHM | *Rangitāne: A Tribal History,* J.M. McEwen. |
| RV | *The Rig Veda: An Anthology,* tr. & ann. Wendy O'Flaherty. |
| RVRG | *The Hymns of the Rigveda,* 2 vols., tr. & comm. Ralph Griffith. |
| RVTP | *Richard of St. Victor: The Twelve Patriarchs, the Mystical Ark, Book Three of the Trinity,* tr. Grover Zinn. |
| SA | *The Secret Adam: A Study of Naṣoraean Gnosis,* E.S. Drower. |
| SAC | "Shamanism Among the Avá-Chiripá," Miguel Bartolomé. |
| SAGH | *Sefer Ari ve-Gurav,* ed. Ya'akov Hillel. |
| SAKH | *Sufi Aphorisms: Kitāb al-Ḥikam,* tr. Victor Danner. |
| SB1–18 | *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam of Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana Vyāsa,* 18 vols., A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. |
| SBAT | *Sar Bachan: An Abstract of the Teachings of Soami Ji Maharaj.* |
| SBB | *Sahajobāī kī Bānī.* |
| SBBP | *Sundar Bilas (Sundar Dās Jī).* |
| SBCP | *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy,* tr. Wing-tsit Chan. |
| SBCP | *Sant Bānī.* |
| SBE | *Sultan Bahu,* J.R. Puri & K.S. Khak. |
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| SBF | "The Symbolism of Birds and Flight in the Writings of Rūzbehān Baqli," C.W. Ernst. |
| SBHG | *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen und Gebete an Šamaš,* P. Anastasius Schollmeyer. |
| SBJT | *The Schocken Book of Jewish Mystical Testimonies,* Louis Jacobs. |
| SBMG | *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa,* 2 vols., tr. C.L. Goswamy & M.A. Shastri. |
| SBP | *Sār Bachan Chhand-Band (Sār Bachan Poetry),* Swāmī Shiv Dayāl Singh. |
| SBPS | *Sar Bachan Poetry (Selections),* Soami Shiv Dayal Singh. |
| SBSU | *Sā'īn Bulleh Shāh,* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu). |
| SBU | *Ḥażrat Sulṭān Bāhū,* Radha Soami Satsang Beas (Urdu). |

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| SBWG | *Srimad Bhagavatam: The Wisdom of God,* tr. Swami Prabhavananda. |
| SCC | *On Sophistical Refutations, etc.,* Aristotle, tr. E.M. Forster & D.J. Furley. |
| SCGO | *Tratado de oración mental,* Fray Tomás de Jesús. |
| SCM1–2 | "Spiritual Concepts of the Maori," 2 parts, Elsdon Best. |
| SCMP | *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book,* T. Säve-Söderbergh. |
| SCSB | *Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ,* St. John of the Cross, tr. David Lewis, corr. Benedict Zimmerman. |
| SCTC | *Science and Christ,* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, tr. René Hague. |
| SDBZ | *The Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen,* Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber, Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Michael Diener, tr. Michael Kohn. |
| SDSL | *Sky Dancer,* K. Dowman. |
| SDST | *Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz,* ed. & tr. R.A. Nicholson. |
| SDT1–4 | *Shōbōgenzō,* 4 vols., tr. Gudo Wafu Nishijima & Chodo Cross. |
| SEKI | *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah,* Moshe Idel. |
| SEMW | *Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* M. Monier-Williams *et al.* |
| SER | *The Spiritual Espousals,* Jan van Ruysbroek, tr. Eric Colledge. |
| SFHA | *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam Ibn al-'Arabī,* Dāwūd Qayṣarī. |
| SG | *Spiritual Gems,* Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji. |
| SGB | *The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism,* Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada. |
| SGFC | *The Secret of the Golden Flower,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| SGGN | *Sri Guru Gita,* tr. Swami Narayanananda. |
| SGHV | *Sha'ar ha-Gilgulim,* Ḥayyim Vital, ed. Yehudah Ashlag. |
| SGR | *Mafātiḥ al-I'jāz fī Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz-i Maḥmūd Shabistarī,* Shaykh Muḥammad Lāhījī, ed. Kayvān Samī'ī. |
| SGRV | *Sant Guru Ravidās Vāṇī,* ed. B.P. Sharmā. |
| SGT | *St Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works,* tr. Michael Slusser. |
| SHCD | "The Story of Honi the Circle-Drawer". |
| SHCP | *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy,* Fu Yu-Lan, ed. D. Bodde. |
| SHCS | *Spiritual Heritage,* Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| SHCS | *Spiritual Heritage: Tape-Recorded Talks of Maharaj Charan Singh.* |
| SHHV | *Sefer ha-Ḥezyonot,* Ḥayyim Vital, ed. Aaron Zeev Aescoly. |
| SHI | *The Spiritual Heritage of India,* Swami Prabhavananda. |
| SHME | *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian,* tr. A.J. Mason. |
| SIEW | *Saintly Influence,* ed. Eric Boynton & Martin Kavka. |
| SIM | *Studies in Islamic Mysticism,* R.A. Nicholson. |
| SIS | *Sawāniḥ,* Aḥmad Ghazzālī, tr. Nasrollah Pourjavady. |
| SJEB | *Shingon,* Taikō Yamasaki, tr. R. & C. Peterson. |

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| SKQ | *Sharḥ-ī Aḥvāl va-Āthār va-Dubaytihā-yi Bābā Ṭāhir ʿUriyān,* ascribed to ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, ed. Javād Maqsūd. |
| SKS | *Self-Knowledge (Atmabodha),* tr. & comm. Swami Nikhilananda. |
| SKSN | *Shaʿar Kevod ha-Shem,* Ephraim ben Israel al-Naqawah. |
| SL | *Spiritual Letters,* Baba Jaimal Singh Ji (1998). |
| SLJ | *The Seven Lights,* Adin Steinsaltz & Josy Eisenberg. |
| SLO | *Spiritual Letters,* Baba Jaimal Singh Ji (1984). |
| SLSS | *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra,* D.T. Suzuki. |
| SMA | *Ṣad Maydān,* Khwājah ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī, ed. Qāsim Anṣārī. |
| SMIK1–13 | *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan,* 13 vols., Hazrat Inayat Khan. |
| SMIK8a | *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan,* Hazrat Inayat Khan, additional material from vol. 8. |
| SMIK8e | *A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty,* vol. 8 (rev.): *Sufi Teachings: The Art of Being.* |
| SMJT | *The Signs of the Messiah,* tr. Michael Wise. |
| SMMG | *The Sefer ha-Maʿasiyot,* ed. Moses Gaster. |
| SMWE | *The Shaman and the Medicine Wheel,* Evelyn Eaton. |
| SNG | *Shrī Nāmdev Gāthā.* |
| SNJI | *Samyutta Nikaya,* tr. John Ireland. |
| SNPS | *Saint Namdev,* J.R. Puri & V.K. Sethi. |
| SNTB | *Samyutta Nikaya,* tr. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| SNVF | *The Sutta-Nipâta,* tr. V. Fausböll. |
| SOA | *Sufis of Andalusia,* tr. R.W.J. Austin. |
| SOSJ | *The Science of the Soul,* Sardar Bahadur Maharaj Jagat Singh. |
| SOU | *Signs of The Unseen,* tr. W.M.Thackston Jr. |
| SP1–3 | *Spiritual Perspectives,* 3 vols., Maharaj Charan Singh. |
| SPAW | *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.* |
| SPBS | *Sahaj Prakash,* Sahajo Bai, ed. & tr. H. Aveling & S. Joshi. |
| SPDS | *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra,* tr. Buddhist Text Translation Society. |
| SPJR | *Stoic Philosophy,* J.M. Rist. |
| SPK | *The Sufi Path of Knowledge,* William Chittick. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| SPL | *The Sufi Path of Love,* William Chittick. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| SPLT | *Saint Paltu: His Life and Teachings,* Isaac Ezekiel. |
| SPM | *The Sacrament of the Present Moment,* J.-P. de Caussade, tr. Kitty Muggeridge. |
| SPS1–4 | *Śiva Purāṇa,* 4 vols., tr. J.L. Shastri. |
| SPZ | "Syrische Poesien," P.P. Zingerle. |
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| SRCD | *The Sublime Revelation,* al-Jīlānī, tr. Muhtar Holland. |
| SRHI | *The Shiite Religion,* D.M. Donaldson. |

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| SRK1–5 | *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita,* 5 vols., Mahendra Nath Gupta. |
| SRVU | *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga,* tr. Jikidō Takasaki. |
| SS1–8 | *The Shurangama Sutra,* 8 vols., expl. Ven. Master Hsuan Hua, tr. Buddhist Text Translation Society. |
| SSAK | *The Secrets of the Self (Asrár-i Khudí),* Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal, tr. R.A. Nicholson. |
| SSE1–15 | *Sufi Symbolism: The Nurbakhsh Encyclopedia of Sufi Terminology,* 15 vols., Dr Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. T. Graham *et al.* See *Acknowledgements.* |
| SSEB | *A Search in Secret Egypt,* Paul Brunton. |
| SSG1–2 | *Shrī Sakal Santa Gāthā,* 2 vols., ed. R.R. Gosavi. |
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| SSGA | *Les sept sages de la Grèce Antique,* Aude Busine. |
| SSHH | "A Seal Within a Seal," Harvey Hames. |
| SSHV | "Of Spirits and Saints: Haiti's Voodoo Pilgrimages," Carole Devillers. |
| SSI1–10 | *Sacred Songs of India,* 10 vols., V.K. Subramanian. |
| SSJR | *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, The Sparkling Stone, The Book of Supreme Truth,* John of Ruysbroeck, tr. C.A. Wynschenk. |
| SSJV | *Samaṇ Suttaṁ,* comp. Jinēndra Varṇī, tr. T.K. Tukol & K.K. Dixit. |
| SSK | *Sīrat-i Shaykh-i Kabīr Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Khafīf Shīrāzī,* Abū al-Ḥasan Daylamī, tr. Rukn al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Junayd Shīrāzī, ed. Annemarie Schimmel. |
| SSKK | *Samayasara,* Shri Kunda Kunda Acharya, tr. J.L. Jaini. |
| SSL | *The Seven Steps of the Ladder of Spiritual Love,* Jan van Ruysbroeck, tr. F. Sherwood Taylor. |
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| SSRF | *Safed Spirituality,* tr. Lawrence Fine. |
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| SSTK | *Seven Steps to the Tao,* Livia Kohn. |
| SSTT | *Ācārya Samantabhadra's Svayambhūstotra,* Vijay K. Jain. |
| SSV | *The Siva Samhita,* tr. Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vasu. |
| SSVC | *Sri Sankara's Vivekachudamani,* tr. P. Chaitanya, ed. S. Dhiman. |
| SSWC | *Spicilegium Syriacum,* tr. William Cureton. |
| SSWS | *The Stoic Sage,* René Brouwer. |
| STCD | *The Story of Tibet,* Thomas Laird. |
| STG1–3 | *Sārtha Tukārām Gāthā,* 3 vols., Tukārām, ed. P.N. Joshi. |
| STHT | *Shōbōgenzō,* Eihei Dogen, tr. Hubert Nearman. |
| SUAR | *The Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s,* tr. A.A. Ramanathan. |

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| SUTP | *The Seal of the Unity of the Three,* Fabrizio Pregadio. |
| SVD1–3 | *Sumaṅgala-vilāsinī,* Buddhaghosa, 3 vols., ed. T.W. Rhys Davids, J.E. Carpenter & W. Stede. |
| SVEB | *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva,* tr. Bhiksu Heng Ching, rev. Bhiksuni Heng Ch'ih. |
| SVF1–4 | *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta,* 4 vols., Hans von Arnim. |
| SVMR | *Secrets of Voodoo,* Milo Rigaud. |
| SVSL | *ʿUmar ibn al-Fâriḍ: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life,* tr. Th. Emil Homerin. |
| SVUW | *The Saṃanya Vedanta Upaniṣad-s,* tr. A.G. Krishna Warrier. |
| SVWT | *Secret of the Vajra World,* Reginald Ray. |
| SWP | *Select Works of Plotinus,* tr. Thomas Taylor. |
| SWPF | *Select Works of Porphyry,* tr. Thomas Taylor. |
| SWVN | *Syrische Wechsellieder von Narses,* ed. & tr. Franz Feldmann. |
| SYAK | *Sefer Yetzirah,* tr. & comm. Aryeh Kaplan. |
| SYYP | *The Science of Yoga,* I.K. Taimni. |
| T1–100 | *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō,* 100 vols., ed. Takakusu Junjirō & Watanabe Kaigokyu. |
| TAA | *The Tarjumān al-Ashwāq,* Ibn al-ʿArabī, tr. R.A. Nicholson. |
| TAMS | *Triloksar,* tr. Vishudhmatiji. |
| TAN1–2 | *Tadhkiratu 'l-Awliya,* 2 parts, ed. R.A. Nicholson. |
| TAT | *Taṣawwuf va-Adabīyāt-i Taṣawwuf,* Y.E. Bertels, tr. Sirus Izadi. |
| TBBK | *The Teaching of Buddha,* ed. Yehan Numata. |
| TBJK | *Traditions of the Bible,* James Kugel. |
| TBLD | *The Long Discourses of the Buddha,* tr. Maurice Walshe. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| TBZB | *The Talmud: Selected Writings,* Ben Zion Bokser. |
| TCC1–4 | *The Taoist Classics,* 4 vols., Thomas Cleary. |
| TCK | "The Three-Character Rhymed Classic on the Kaʿbah," Ma Fu-ch'u, tr. Peter Hobson. |
| TCSD | *Tukaram: The Ceaseless Song of Devotion,* Chandravati Rajwade. |
| TCVC | *Tao Te Ching: Tao Virtue Classic,* ann. & expl. Derek Lin. |
| TDK | *A Testament of Devotion,* Thomas Kelly. |
| TDOS | *The Dervishes or Oriental Spiritualism,* J.P. Brown. |
| TEAK | *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology,* Livia Kohn. |
| TEG | *Taoism: An Essential Guide,* Eva Wong. |
| TGFN | *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta,* ed. Augustus Nauck. |
| TGH1–3 | *Thrice-Greatest Hermes,* 3 vols., G.R.S. Mead. |
| TGLE | *Tao, The Great Luminant,* tr. Evan Morgan. |
| TGTD | *The Teachings of Goswami Tulsidas,* K.N. Upadhyaya. |
| THS | *Ṭarāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq,* Shīrāzī, ed. M.J. Maḥjūb. |
| THSK | *The Triadic Heart of Śiva,* Paul Muller-Ortega. |
| TIVU | *The Taoist Inner View of the Universe and the Immortal Realm,* Ni Hua-Ching. |

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| TK1–10 | *The Treasury of Knowledge,* 10 vols., Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, tr. Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. |
| TLDS | *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying,* Sogyal Rinpoche. |
| TMC1–3 | *Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho,* 3 vols., Albert von Le Coq. |
| TMED | *Taoist Meditation,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| TMG | "The Tohunga Maori," Walter Gudgeon. |
| TMLT | *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques,* ed. Livia Kohn. |
| TMNM | *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk,* Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. |
| TMPS | *Taoist Mystical Philosophy,* Livia Kohn. |
| TMS | "Tapu," Michael Shirres. |
| TMSC | *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras,* ed. G.C.C. Chang. |
| TMT1–10 | *A Treasury of Mystic Terms,* Parts I–II, 10 vols., ed. John Davidson. |
| TMU | *Thirty Minor Upaniṣads,* tr. K. Narayanasvami Aiyar. |
| TNB1–4 | *Tuḥfat al-Nuẓẓār,* 4 vols., Ibn Baṭṭūtah, ed. C. Defrémery & B.R. Sanguinetti. |
| TOP | *The Treatise of the Pool,* ʿObadyah Maimonides, ed. & tr. Paul Fenton. |
| TOS | *Tayyibat,* tr. Lucas White King. |
| TPA1–2 | *Traditions of the Prophet (Ahadith*), 2 vols., Dr Javad Nurbakhsh, tr. L. Lewisohn & T. Graham. |
| TPEF | *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy,* Georg Feuerstein. |
| TPEQ | *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters,* Stephen Eskildsen. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| TPU | *Thirteen Principal Upanishads,* tr. R.E. Hume. |
| TQH | *Tamhīdāt,* ʿAyn al-Quḍat Hamadānī, ed. ʿAfīf ʿUsayrān. |
| TRAK | *Tohunga – The Revival,* Samuel Timoti Robinson. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| TRI | *Taoism: The Road to Immortality,* John Blofeld. |
| TRW | *Tending the Roots of Wisdom,* comp. Hong Yingming, tr. Paul White & Frank Jiang. |
| TS | *The Teachings of Silvanus,* J. Zandee. |
| TSAA | *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah,* Anṣārī, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī. |
| TSH1–2 | *Tulsī Sāhib Hāthrasvale kī Shabdāvalī,* 2 vols. |
| TSHS | *Tree of Souls,* Howard Schwartz. |
| TSP1–6 | *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra,* 6 vols., Hemacandra, tr. H. Johnson. |
| TSPI | "The Stoic Sage in the Cosmic City," Dirk Obbink. |
| TSR | *The Triumphal Sun,* Annemarie Schimmel. |
| TSRM | *Traditions of the Seven Ṛṣis,* John Mitchiner. |
| TSSH | *Tulsi Sahib: Saint of Hathras,* J.R. Puri & V.K. Sethi. |
| TSSW | *Through a Speculum that Shines,* Elliot Wolfson. |
| TSTD | *Tulsī Satsai,* Tulsīdās. ed. Śyām Sundar Dās. |
| TSWT | "The 36 – Who Are They?" Rabbi Raymond A. Zwerin. |
| TT1–2 | *The Texts of Taoism,* 2 vols., tr. James Legge. |

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| TTCS | *Tao Te Ching,* tr. Jonathan Star. |
| TTCT | *Tao Te Ching: A New Translation,* tr. Ch'u Ta-Kao. |
| TTCW | *Tao Te Ching,* Lao Tzu, tr. John C. H. Wu. |
| TTEP | *Taoist Texts,* ed. & tr. Frederic Balfour. |
| TTHQ | *Tafsīr al-Tustari,* ed. Muḥammad Bāsil ʿUyūn al-Sūd. |
| TTQ | *The Thousand and Twelve Questions,* E.S. Drower. |
| TTT1–10 | "Türkische Turfantexte," 10 parts, W. Bang, A. von Gabain, T. Kowalski, G.R. Rachmati, W. Winter *et al.* |
| TTTT | *Tikao Talks,* Herries Beattie. |
| TTW | *Teachings of the Tao,* tr. Eva Wong. |
| TVEJ | *Tratado de la vida, loores y excelencias del glorioso apóstol y bienaventurado evangelista San Juan,* Diego de Estella. |
| TVW1–5 | *The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna,* 5 vols., tr. Étienne Lamotte & Gelongma Karma Migme Chödrön. |
| TWF24 | *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325,* vol. 24, ed. Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson. |
| TWW | *Tao: The Watercourse Way,* A. Watts & A. Chung-liang Huang. |
| TYPY | *The Textbook of Yoga Psychology,* Rammurti Mishra. |
| TYVL | *A Translation of Yoga-Vâsishta: Laghu,* tr. K.N. Aiyer. |
| TYYY | *Toldot Yaʿakov Yosef,* Yaʿakov Yosef of Polnoy. |
| U1–4 | *The Upanishads,* 4 vols., tr. & comm. Swami Nikhilananda. |
| UAQJ | *Utterances of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī,* tr. Muhtar Holland. |
| UBBA | "Unidentifiable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Asuka Period," J.H. Kamstra. |
| UHEH | *Uniter of Heaven and Earth,* Miles Krassen. |
| UHMD | Unpublished handwritten manuscripts, *Shabds* of Dariyā Sāhib. |
| UJM1–2 | *Understanding Jewish Mysticism,* 2 vols., David Blumenthal. |
| UMDC | *The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen,* Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. |
| URC | *Understanding Reality,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| UVPP | *Ācārya Umāsvāti Vācaka's Praśamaratiprakaraṇa,* ed. & tr. Y.S. Shastri. |
| UZMB | *The Unborn,* ed. & tr. N. Waddell. |
| VBGD | *Vārān Bhāī Gurdās,* ed. H. & V. Singh. |
| VBSC | *The Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra Sutra,* tr. Upasika Chihmann. |
| VC | *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Śankarācārya,* tr. Svāmī Turiyānanda. |
| VCSM | *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya,* tr. Swāmī Mādhavānanda. |
| VE | *The Vedic Experience,* Raimundo Panikkar. |
| VES | *Vitality, Energy, Spirit,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| VHAM | *Voodoo in Haiti,* Alfred Métraux. |
| VIN1–2 | *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects,* 2 vols., A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith. |

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| VPI1–2 | *Varāha Purāṇa,* 2 vols., tr. S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer. |
| VPT1–2 | *Vāyu Purāṇa,* 2 vols., tr. G.V. Tagare. |
| VPTD | *Vinayapatrikā,* Śrīmad Goswāmī Tulsīdās. |
| VPW | *The Vishṇu Purāṇa,* tr. H.H. Wilson, ed. F. Hall. |
| VSP1–2 | *Verzeichniss der Sanskrit- und Prâkrit-Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin,* 2 vols., A.F. Weber. |
| VSSG | *The Vairocanabhisambodhi Sutra,* tr. Rolf Giebel. |
| VSY | *Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda Yogindra,* tr. Swami Nikhilananda. |
| VTP3 | *Vinaya Texts,* Part III, tr. T.W. Rhys Davids & H. Oldenberg. |
| VYM | *Vayakhel Mosheh,* Rabbi Mosheh of Prague. |
| VYV | *Vasiṣṭha's Yoga,* tr. Swami Venkatesananda. |
| WAPH | *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Pierre Hadot, tr. Michael Chase. |
| WBC1–4 | *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs,* 4 vols., tr. K. Walsh & I.M. Edmonds. |
| WCA1–2 | *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria,* 2 vols., tr. W. Wilson. |
| WCI | *The Wisdom of China and India,* ed. Lin Yutang. |
| WDF | *The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers,* tr. Benedicta Ward. |
| WH1–464 | *Wheel* (Magazine), Buddhist Publication Society. |
| WJGY | *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel,* Dilgo Khyentse, tr. Könchog Tenzin. |
| WJMA | *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras,* tr. M. Dods *et al.* |
| WLT | *The Wisdom of Laotse,* ed. & tr. Lin Yutang. |
| WMPT | *Kunzang Lama'i Shelung,* Patrul Rinpoche, tr. Padmakara Translation Group. |
| WNTL | *Buddhist Nuns in Taiwan and Sri Lanka,* Wei-Yi Cheng. |
| WP | *The Wisdom of the Prophet,* Muhyi-d-Din ibn ʿArabi, tr. Titus Burckhardt & Angela Culme-Seymour. |
| WPJ1–4 | *The Works of Philo Judaeus,* 4 vols., tr. C.D. Yonge. |
| WPUR | *The Wit of Peter Ustinov,* comp. D. Richards. |
| WPW | *The Way of a Pilgrim,* tr. R.M. French. |
| WRLL | "Women Regaining a Lost Legacy," Hema Goonatilake. |
| WSJA | "Walking with Social Justice," ed. Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson & Deborah Silver. |
| WTDA | *The Works of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius of Alexandria and Archelaus,* tr. S.D.F. Salmond. |
| WTM1–2 | *With the Three Masters,* 3 vols., Rai Sahib Munshi Ram. |
| WTUM | *Wen-Tzu: Understanding the Mysteries,* tr. Thomas Cleary. |
| WWTC | *Writings in Time of War,* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, tr. R. Hague. |
| WZ1–3 | *The Wisdom of the Zohar,* 3 vols., arr. F. Lachower & I. Tishby. |
| XMIN | *The X in Mexico: Growth within Tradition,* Irene Nicholson. |
| YDSP | *The Yoga-Darśana,* tr. Gangânâtha Jhâ. |
| YPAA | *Āchārya-Amitagati's Yogasāra-Prābhṛta,* tr. S.C. Jain. |
| YSBB | *Yogasūtra of Patañjali,* tr. Bangali Baba. |

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| YSPB | *The Yoga System of Patañjali or the Ancient Hindu Doctrine of Concentration of Mind,* tr. J.H. Woods. |
| YTPM | *Yoga Tantra,* H.H. Dalai Lama, Dzong-ka-ba, tr., ed. & ann. Jeffrey Hopkins. |
| YU | *The Yoga Upaniṣads,* tr. T.R. S'rīnivāsa Ayyaṅgār. |
| YVV1–4 | *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha of Vālmīki,* 4 vols., tr. V.L. Mitra, ed. R.P. Arya. |
| ZAMG | "The Zaddik as Axis Mundi in Later Judaism," Arthur Green. |
| ZBMC | *Zen and the Brain,* James Austin. See *Acknowledgements.* |
| ZDWK | *Zen: Dawn in the West,* Philip Kapleau. |
| ZDZP | *The Zaddik,* Samuel Dresner. |
| ZMM | *Zohar,* Moshe Miller. |
| ZMSB | *The Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain,* Ariel Bension. |
| ZSDP | *Zulu Shaman,* Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa. |
| ZSS1–5 | *The Zohar,* 5 vols., tr. Harry Sperling & Maurice Simon. |
| ZTHP | *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po,* tr. John Blofeld. |
| ZTRR | *Zen Teaching of Rinzai,* tr. Irmgard Schloegl. |
| ZW1–991 | *Zángwài dàoshū,* 991 titles in 36 vols. |
| ZZMJ | *Zhōngguó zǐxué míngzhù jíchéng,* Taiwan, 1978. |

# 7.1 Guides and Practitioners
(AB – IMĀM)

Though living in the material world in a material body, human beings are essentially spiritual in nature. Spiritual seekers and practitioners are therefore those who have become aware, to a greater or lesser extent, of their inner spirituality. Since this spirituality is innate, spiritual yearning arises naturally in human beings, finding expression in a variety of ways, among which are the many spiritual practices to be found in human societies, cultures, and religions.

There are many kinds of spiritual practice and spiritual practitioner. Understandably, individuals will have progressed to different levels of awareness of the universal spirituality that lies within them. Individuals will also add their own personal dimension to their chosen path, for the way to the Supreme is primarily personal.

It is natural for human beings to want to help each other, though motives may be mixed, and some practitioners who have made some headway on the path to enlightenment may also adopt the role of teachers. Good spiritual guidance is always helpful if not essential, but guides are likely to have varying degrees of spiritual realization. Yet here and there among them will be those who have reached the journey's end, have fully realized the Ultimate, the Divine – or whatever name they may give to the nameless Source of all being and existence. These few have not just touched the hem of His garment, but have experienced Him in all His glory.

Terms, names, titles, epithets and so on for these spiritual teachers and practitioners constitute the basis of this collection of entries. The generic names of some particular esoteric groups are also included.

**ab**, **abbā**, **abī**, **abū** (A/P) *Lit.* father; also, a title and form of address for a revered person as in *Abūnā* (reverend Father), an honorific used for clerics, Sufi masters, and so on; also in *Abānā* (our Father), the beginning of the Lord's prayer in Arabic; used as *abū* (father), *abī* (father) and *abbā* (father) in Muslim names, where *Abū* precedes the first name of the eldest son or, if the father has no sons, the eldest daughter; hence, Abū al-Qāsim (the father of Qāsim) is a name of the Prophet Muḥammad, assumed on the birth of his son, Qāsim, who died in infancy.

The *shaykh* or master of a Sufi is revered as a father because the master teaches and cares for his disciple like a father for his child:

> The master is a true father *(ab)* to him (the disciple). As the Prophet said, "Fathers *(ābā')* are of three kinds: the father *(ab)* who gave you birth, the father *(ab)* who taught you, and the father *(ab)* who brought you up."
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah 492, GSTA p.160, GST pp.110–11*

**abdāl**, **budalā**' (A/P) (sg. *badal, badīl*) *Lit.* substitutes, deputies; in Islam, a group of *awliyā'* (friends of God, saints, sg. *walī*) or holy men; a term related to *mubdal* (changed, transformed); though *abdāl* is the plural of *badal,* it is often treated as singular in Persian and Turkish, where it is given the plural form of *abdālān.*

The presence of the *abdāl,* through their powerful spiritual influence, is regarded as a part of the divine dispensation, necessary for the welfare of humanity and the continued stability of the world. Sufis disagree as to their precise number and position in the hierarchy of similar spiritualized human beings, but all agree upon their importance in the scheme of things.

The various grades of saint *(walī)* have been a matter of Sufi debate since at least the early tenth century, and their roles have been subject to considerable speculation. The eleventh-century Sufi Hujwīrī provides a breakdown of these categories, including the place occupied by the *abdāl:*

> Of those *(awliyā')* who have power to loose and to bind and are the officers of the divine court – there are three hundred called *akhyār* (the good), and forty called *abdāl,* and seven called *abrār* (the righteous, the holy), and four called *awtād* (supports), and three called *nuqabā'* (leaders), and one called *quṭb* (axis) or *ghawth* (helper). All these know one another, and cannot act save by mutual consent.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV, KMM p.269, KM p.214*

The *quṭb* (the spiritual pole or axis) is at the head of the hierarchy, and is the most spiritualized living being in the world. As a sphere spins around its

axis, so the world is believed to revolve around him. The *awtād* ('tent pegs', 'supports') are so called because they are a primary support for humanity. Without these four primary tent pegs, it is believed that the tent of the world would collapse. A modern mind may ask, "What about the rest of the universe and all its planets?", but of course such questions did not arise at that time. The belief is perhaps a way of indicating the significant, yet hidden role played by evolved spiritualized human beings in this world.

The *abdāl* includes both men and women. Jāmī relates that when a *shaykh* was asked, "How many are the *abdāl?*", he answered, "Forty souls", and when asked why he did not say, "forty men", his reply was, "There have been women among them."[1] Some authorities, such as Ibn al-ʿArabī,[2] say that there are only seven *abdāl,* others forty, and yet others, several hundred.

Sufis have given a number of reasons why the *abdāl* are so-called. According to one interpretation, they are substitutes for the Prophet, since prophecy is believed to have culminated in and ended with him. Rūmī refers to them as those who have been "transformed *(mubdal)*"[3] and "transmuted *(mubdal)*... by divine transmutation *(tabdīl-i yazdān)*".[4] Muẓaffar ʿAlī Shāh Kirmānī says likewise:

> Who is a substitute *(abdāl)?* He who has transformed his heart,
> and whose *nafs* (lower mind) has been turned upside down and broken.
>
> *Muẓaffar ʿAlī Shāh Kirmānī, Dīvān-i Mushtāqīyah, DMK p.50, in FNI16 p.24; cf. in SSE6 p.17*

Tahānawī, one of the most well-known Sufi systematizers, summarizes a number of variant beliefs:

> In the *ṣūfī* tradition, the term 'substitutes *(abdāl)*' has many connotations. Sometimes it is applied generally to those who have transformed *(tabdīl)* blameworthy traits into praiseworthy ones.... Sometimes it is applied to a specific group, for example, of forty persons who share a particular set of characteristics. Some maintain that the substitutes *(abdāl)* are seven in number. They maintain, further, that the supports *(awtād)* are distinct from the substitutes *(abdāl),* while others assert that the supports *(awtād),* along with two *imāms* (ministers to the *quṭb*) and the *quṭb* himself, are all substitutes *(abdāl).*
>
> These seven figures are called substitutes *(abdāl)* because when one of them departs, another accedes from a lower rank to fill his place. Others maintain that the name substitutes *(abdāl)* applies to the supports *(awtād),* for God has bestowed a power upon them, allowing them, if they so wish, to create a substitute *(badal)* of their outward presence in their current place while appearing in another.

> Those, however, who have no control over being in two places at the same time are not substitutes *(abdāl),* but friends of God *(awliyā').*
>
> Several commentaries state that Abū Saʿīd (al-Khayr) was asked, "Who stands higher, the supports *(al-awtād)* or the substitutes *(al-abdāl)?*" He replied that it is the supports *(al-awtād).* When asked why, he explained, "Because the substitutes *(al-abdāl)* pass from state *(ḥāl)* to state *(ḥāl),* changing from station *(maqām)* to station *(maqām),* while the supports *(al-awtād)* have reached the end, and their foundations are firm. They are the ones who support the world and are at the station of stability *(maqām al-tamkīn).*"
>
> The *Mir'āt al-Asrār* states, "The Prophet of God said, 'The substitutes *(budalā')* count as seven of my community. They are located in the seven regions (heavens).' . . . The duty of the substitutes *(abdāl)* is to help created beings. They all possess awareness of the divine knowledge and mysteries existing in the seven stars *(kawākib sabʿah).* God has empowered them with the greatest influence."
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT1 pp.198–99; cf. in SSE6 pp.12–13*

According to Tahānawī, the *Mir'āt al-Asrār* ('Mirror of Mysteries') adds that there are a further "three hundred and fifty-seven more substitutes *(abdāl),* all residing in the mountains, feeding on the leaves of the acacia and other trees, and the locusts of the wilderness." "Steeped in gnosis," says this text, they remain where they are. This makes three hundred and sixty four. The total number is then said to be four hundred and four, and a *ḥadīth* is quoted to account for the remaining forty, "As indicated by the Prophet's statement, 'The substitutes count as forty men of my community, twelve of them in Sham and twenty-eight of them in Iraq.'" Sham consisted roughly of present-day Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine, while the Iraq of those days covered the country east of the Syrian desert and west of the Zagros mountains. Tahānawī also adds that the *Laṭā'if-i Ashrafī* maintains that the majority of people refer to the forty *budalā'* as "the righteous *(abrār)*".[5]

Other Sufi texts provide alternative descriptions of the hierarchy of spiritualized human beings, among whose ranks are included seven *umanā'* (trustworthy ones) and three *khulafā'* (vicegerents).[6] Their degree of spiritual attainment is sometimes associated with one of the angels or biblical characters of old, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Gabriel, Michael and Isrāfīl,[7] or Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Idrīs (Enoch), Joseph, Jesus and Adam,[8] personalities who are also linked in Sufi thought with one or other of the seven heavens or other stations *(maqāmāt)* of spiritual ascent.

It is generally said that when one of these holy men dies, another from a lesser rank is appointed to take his place. The general principle seems to be that the world is never without spiritual representatives or teachers from each of the

inner heavens or levels of creation. All accounts agree that there is never more than one *quṭb* at a time, and that when he dies, he is immediately replaced.

The identity of the *abdāl* is understood to be a secret known only to God. The disciples of a particular master may often praise him not only as the *quṭb,* but as the *quṭb* of *quṭbs (quṭb al-aqṭāb),* yet few actually have any inkling of who is one of the *abdāl:*

> They are dervishes, abject in destitution;
> They are kings, outwardly appearing
> to have fallen low, like beggars.
> Throughout the month, both night and day,
> they are in the dust of annihilation *(fanā').*
> *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV1 p.151, in SSE6 p.14*

The degree of spirituality attained by these holy men is also believed to have given them special knowledge and powers. Ibn al-ʿArabī credits them with a knowledge of the workings of destiny: "They know the affairs and mysteries (of fate) that God has placed in the seven planets."[9] Repeating popular folklore, Saʿdī writes that the *abdāl* can enter water and fire,[10] and that a stone used by the one of the *abdāl* becomes silver.[11] Niʿmat Allāh Valī observes that they can leave their bodies at will without anyone being aware of it:

> The substitutes *(al-budalā')* consist of seven men. Whenever any of them travels, he leaves his bodily form in such a way that no one is aware that he is absent therefrom. This is what the term substitute *(badal)* refers to. The seven substitutes *(budalā')* possess the heart of Abraham.
>
> > The *shaykh* is in Egypt, his cloak (body) in Canaan:
> > this is the game of the cloak!
> > *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.16, in SSE6 p.17*

Or, as the *abdāl* are described in a *ḥadīth* quoted by Rūzbihān:

> Their hands are on the earth:
> their spirits in the angelic realm *(malakūt).*
> *Ḥadīth, in Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 1:14, MARB p.17; cf. in SSE12 pp.178–79*

Although most Sufis seem to have spoken of the *abdāl* in a specific sense, Rūmī – characteristically – breaks the mould, and often uses the term more generally for all saints of a high order. He speaks of "the lovingkindnesses of God to the *abdāl* (saints)",[12] who draw their "power" not from the sustenance of this world, but "from God":

Gabriel's power was not from the kitchen:
it came from beholding the Creator of existence.
Likewise, know this power of the *abdāl* of God
to be from God, not from eatables and food trays.
Their bodies too have been moulded of the Light,
so that they have transcended the spirit and the angel.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī III:6–8; cf. MJR4 p.5*

To Rūmī, perfect saints are dispensers of the divine "Breath *(Dam)*" of the creative power, which – like "spring rain" *(bārān-i baḥār)* – brings life to the garden of the soul:

Marvellous is the benefit of spring rain,
but to the garden the autumn rain is like a fever.
The spring rain nurtures it tenderly,
while the autumn rain makes it sickly and wan. . . .
The Breath *(Dam)* of the *abdāl* is from that spiritual springtide:
from it there grows a green garden in heart and soul.
From their breaths *(anfās)* there comes to him who is fortunate,
the same effect as that of the spring rain on the tree.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2038–39, 2042–43; cf. MJR2 pp.110–11*

The *abdāl* dispense spiritual wisdom to humanity, and those on whom they shower their grace become illuminated by the saint's light and wisdom. As Rūmī writes, "As the beam of the spirit *(jān)* falls on the body (and gives it life), so fall the beams of the *abdāl* on my soul *(jān).*"[13] Further illustrating the point, Rūmī relates the story of Muḥammad's scribe who, in writing down the revelations of the Prophet, found himself imbued with reflected wisdom. Falling into the error of thinking that this wisdom was his own, he became filled with pride, which became his undoing; for he ultimately left both Muḥammad and the spiritual path, and became the Prophet's opponent:

The reflection of wisdom led astray that miserable one:
be not self-conceited, lest it utterly destroy you.
O brother, wisdom is flowing in upon you:
it comes from the *abdāl,*
and in you it is only a borrowed thing.
Although the house has found a light within it,
that light has shone forth from a light-giving neighbour.
Render thanks, be not beguiled by vanity:
do not turn up your nose in disdain;
Hearken attentively, and show no self-conceit.

It is a hundred pities and griefs that this borrowed state
has put the religious communities far from religious communion.
I am the slave of him who does not regard himself
in every caravanserai (spiritual stage)
as having attained the table (of divine union).

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3254–59; cf. MJR2 p.177*

Such assertions regarding the saints are difficult for an ordinary person to believe or understand. Rūmī addresses the difficulty most human beings have in perceiving or understanding the stature and power of true saints as God's 'substitutes' or 'deputies' on earth:

Do not measure the actions of holy men *(pākān)* by yourself,
though *shīr* (lion) and *shīr* (milk) are the same in writing.
On this account, the whole world has gone astray:
scarcely anyone is aware of God's *abdāl.*
They set up a claim of equality with the prophets *(anbiyā'):*
they supposed the saints *(awliyā')* to be like themselves.
"Behold," they said, "we are human, they are human:
both we and they are in bondage to sleep and food."
In their blindness, they do not perceive
that there is an infinite difference between them.

Both species of *zanbūr* ate and drank from the same place,
but from one (the hornet) came a sting,
and from the other (the bee), honey.
Both species of deer ate grass and drank water:
from one came dung, and from the other pure musk.
Both reeds drank from the same water source:
one is empty, the other full of sugar.
Consider hundreds of thousands of such likenesses
and observe that the distance between the two
is a seventy years' journey.
This one eats, and filth is discharged from him:
that one eats, and becomes entirely the light of God.
This one eats, and from him is born avarice and envy:
that one eats, from him is born only love of the One.
This one is good soil, that one brackish and bad;
This one is a fair angel, and that one a devil and wild beast.
If both resemble each other in aspect, it may well be so:
bitter water and sweet water are both clear.
Who can distinguish between them except a man possessing taste?
Find him: he knows the sweet water from the brine.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:263–76; cf. MJR2 p.18*

By way of example, he compares the spiritual ignorance of the people of this world and their refusal to hear what the saints have to say about life here to an embryo that refuses to believe that it is confined in a dark place:

> Although in this world the *abdāl* speak of that other world
> to the common folk, saying,
> "This world is an exceedingly dark and narrow pit,
> outside is a world without scent or colour":
> Yet nothing entered the ear of a single one of them,
> for desire is a barrier huge and stout.
> Desire closes the ear to hearing:
> self-interest closes the eye from beholding,
> even as, in the case of the embryo,
> desire for the blood that is its nourishment in the low abodes
> debarred it from listening to the news of this world:
> It knows no breakfast but blood.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:63–68; cf. MJR4 p.8*

The *abdāl* may know most things, but Rūmī says that there are also some realized souls who pass their lives in secret, working in secret. Their identity is not even known to the *abdāl:*

> Another group go about very secretly:
> how should they be known to people of externals?
> They possess everything,
> yet no one's eye notices their sovereignty for a moment.
> Both they and their miracles are in the divine sanctuary:
> even the *abdāl* have not heard their names.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3104–6; cf. MJR4 p.174*

Rūmī is referring to the *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of the Prophet):

> My saints *(awliyā')* are sheltered by My concealment; none knows them but Me.
>
> *Ḥadīth, AMBF 131; cf. MJR7 p.272*

See also: **quṭb**, **ṣiddīq**, **walī**.

1. Jāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-Uns, NUJ* p.615, in *RM* pp.2–3.
2. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:7.9, *FMIA3* (1:73) p.12, *SPK* p.370.
3. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* VI:3192; *cf. MJR6* p.434.
4. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:4000; *cf. MJR4* p.224.
5. Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT1* p.200, in *SSE6* pp.13–14.

6. Abū ʿUthmān Qurrī, in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.58; *cf.* in *SSE6* pp.14–15.
7. Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, *Rasā'il, RNV1* pp.153–54, in *SSE6* pp.15–16.
8. *Mir'āt al-Asrār,* in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT1* p.199, in *SSE6* p.13.
9. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:7.9, *FMIA3* (1:73) p.12, *SPK* p.370.
10. Saʿdī, *Bustān* 3:221, *KSSS* p.119, *BSS* p.195.
11. Saʿdī, *Bustān* 6:112, *KSSS* p.143, *BSS* p.294.
12. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:1434, *MJR2* p.79.
13. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:3273, *MJR2* p.178.

**ʿabd al-Kullī** (A), **ʿabd-i Kullī**, **ʿabd-i Kull** (P) *Lit.* universal *(kullī)* servant *(ʿabd).* In Sufism, if a Sufi seeks by meditation to imbibe the qualities of a particular divine Name, he may be given a corresponding epithet such as *ʿabd al-Raḥīm* (servant of the Merciful), *ʿabd al-Karīm* (servant of the Generous), and so on. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, *ʿabd al-Kullī* is a term reserved for the perfect man in the sense that he has become all-encompassing by imbibing the qualities of all the divine Names.[1]

See also: **ʿabd Allāh**.

1. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:615.34, *FMIA4* (4:281) p.367, *SPK* p.371.

**ʿabd Allāh**, **ʿabdullāh** (A/P) *Lit.* servant *(ʿabd)* of God *(Allāh);* hence, *ʿubūdīyah* (servanthood); a common Muslim name, predating Islam – Muḥammad's father, for example, was called ʿAbdullāh; mystically, a saint, a prophet; an epithet of Muḥammad, used in the *Qur'ān:*

> When the servant of *Allāh (ʿabdullāhi)* stood up in prayer to Him, they crowded around him in a dense crowd.
>
> *Qur'ān 72:19; cf. MGK, KPA*

Al-Halveti says that *ʿabd Allāh* refers to one who has attained the highest degree of sainthood:

> *ʿAbd Allāh* is a servant who has received the highest level and honour which is possible to attain within creation, because the Creator, with the secrets of all His Attributes, is manifested in him. Therefore, *Allāh* Most High has called His beloved Prophet by this name.
>
> *Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, The Most Beautiful Names, MBN p.6*

ʿInāyat Khān agrees:

> *ʿAbd Allāh,* the servant of God, . . . is the highest title that can be given to man.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK8e p.213*

In Sufism, to become the servant of any of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh* – such as *ʿabd al-Karīm* (servant of the Generous), *ʿabd al-Majīd* (servant of the Glorious), *ʿabd al-Raḥīm* (servant of the Merciful), or *ʿabd al-Qādir* (servant of the Capable) – means that the devotee has so thoroughly contemplated upon this Name or aspect of God that he has become immersed in it. Hence, Ibn al-ʿArabī describes the *quṭb* (the pole, the axis), the most spiritualized human being of his time, as the *ʿabd Allāh:*

> The *quṭb* is the servant of *Allāh (ʿabd Allāh)* and the servant of the All-Inclusive *(ʿabd al-Jāmiʿ),* so he is described by all the Names, through having assumed their traits and realized them. He is the mirror of God, the place of revelation . . . and divine manifestation. He is the possessor of the present moment, the eye of time, and the mystery of destiny.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 2:573.19; cf. SPK p.412 (n.13)*

To be the servant of God *(ʿabd Allāh)* also means that the saint has contemplated on the Greatest Name *(al-Ism al-Aʿẓam)* and has imbibed its essence:

> *ʿAbd Allāh* is he who has been illumined by God (*al-Ḥaqq,* Truth) with all His Names. There is thus no devotee of God in a more exalted station than he; for he has realized the Greatest Name *(al-Ism al-Aʿẓam)* of God and assumed all its attributes. On acquiring these qualities the Prophet was especially distinguished by that Name.
>
> *Al-Qāshānī, Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah 293, GSTA p.91; cf. GST p.66*

In orthodox Islam, the Greatest Name is *'Allāh';* but in Sufism, *al-Ism al-Aʿẓam* is the unspoken and unwritten Word, the divine creative power by which God creates and sustains the creation.

The expression, the 'servants of *Allāh (ʿibādullāhi)*', also appears in the *Qur'ān,*[1] as well as in Sufi and other Muslim literature, where it refers to devotees of Islam or the Sufi path, depending upon the context.

See also: ʿ**abd** (▸4), **bandah** (▸4), ʿ**ubūdīyah** (▸4).

1. *Qur'ān* 37:40, 74, 128, 160, 169, 44:18, 76:6.

**ʿābid** (A/P) (pl. *ʿābidūn, ʿubbād*) *Lit.* worshipper, devotee; a person who performs external acts of worship and devotion, such as prayer, fasting, reading the *Qurʾān* and so on, according to the *sharīʿah* (religious law):

> Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān asked a pious devotee *(ʿābid),* "Is there anyone who is the object of your attachment and affection?"
>
> He replied (taking the *Qurʾān* in his lap), "This is my friend."
>
> *Al-Ghazālī, Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn 1:8, IUDG1 p.384, RRS p.18*

The *ʿābid* is often compared by Sufis with the *zāhid* (ascetic) and the gnostic *(ʿārif).* The gnostic who has direct mystical experience of Reality is deemed the more spiritually advanced:

> Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jalāʾ said, "One for whom praise and blame are the same is an ascetic *(zāhid);* one who observes statutes of religion promptly at the start of their appointed periods is a worshipper *(ʿābid);* and one whose every action comes from God is one who professes divine unity *(muvaḥḥid).*"
>
> *Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, KTS p.168, in FNI6 p.93; cf. in SSE6 p.75*

The *ʿārif* worships God in an elevated state of consciousness, but not so the *ʿābid:*

> Nahrajūrī said, "The worshipper *(ʿābid)* prays to God out of fear, while the gnostic *(ʿārif)* in union worships God in a spiritual state."
>
> *Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, KTS p.69, in FNI6 p.91, in SSE6 p.73*

Though gnosis may be the higher mode of worship, those who possess it are rare, and most people are content with external observances and practices:

> Kattānī said, "God looked at a number of His servants and saw none who possessed gnosis *(maʿrifat)* of Him; consequently, He put them to work serving *(khidmat)* and worshipping *(ʿibādat).*"
>
> *Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, KTS p.391, in FNI6 p.90; cf. in SSE6 p.72*

It is said in Sufism that God worships Himself through His creation. Hence, Ibn al-ʿArabī says:

> Know that existence is divided between worshipper *(ʿābid)* and Worshipped *(maʿbūd).* The worshipper *(ʿābid)* is everything other than God, that is, the cosmos, which is called and named 'servant *(ʿabd)*'. The Worshipped is that which is named God.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:78.9, FMIA5 (4:321) pp.113–14, SPK p.311*

Consequently, Niʿmat Allāh Valī observes that the true worshipper is he who has been annihilated in "the Worshipped":

> The servant of the Subsistent subsists *(baqā)* in God while experiencing absolute annihilation, worshipping God through God in absolute servanthood *(ʿubūdīyat)*. . . . He is both worshipper *(ʿābid)* and Worshipped *(Maʿbūd)*, . . . for no vestige or trace remains of this worshipper *(ʿābid)* who has become annihilated in the manifestation of the face *(wajh)* of the Subsistent *(al-Bāqī)*.
>
> If the face of the Subsistent should appear,
> no aspect of you and me will remain.
>
> *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.128; cf. in SSE7 p.137*

This is a high spiritual state. Tahānawī therefore points out that there are very few really true worshippers. Most are sincere or insincere imitators or "would-be worshippers":

> The truthful imitators of the worshippers *(ʿubbād)* are those who spend their time engrossed in prayers; however, their *nafs* (lower mind) not being purged of human nature, they find themselves constantly flagging in their duties and practices. Anyone who has yet to discover the pleasure of worship, finding it an effort to practise, is known as a would-be worshipper *(mutaʿabbid)*.
>
> The false imitators of the worshippers *(ʿubbād)* are a class of hypocrites whose view of their worship is based on public approval, having no faith in their hearts in the certainty of the hereafter. Such a practitioner is also known as a would-be worshipper *(mutaʿabbid)*.
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.56; cf. in SSE6 p.118*

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Illāh highlights the fundamental difficulty in worship when he observes that it is the self-consciousness of both the *ʿubbād* (devotees) and the *zuhhād* (ascetics) that separates them from God, and thus from everything else. The worship of the "devotees" and the practices of the "ascetics" absorb their attention, to the exclusion of God:

> The devotees *(ʿubbād)* and the ascetics *(zuhhād)*
> are alienated from everything
> only because of their absence from God in everything.
> Had they contemplated Him in everything,
> they would not have been alienated from anything.
>
> *Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Illāh, Kitāb al-Ḥikam 12:115, SAKH p.40, BWIC p.75*

Similarly, Ibn al-ʿArabī says that ascetics and devotees attempt to purify themselves inwardly of all imperfections, but that is as far as they can go. They are unaware of the experiences and states of being known to mystics:

> Men who are dominated by renunciation *(zuhd),* constant devotion *(tabattul),* and pure acts are all of them praiseworthy. They purify their inward dimensions from every blameworthy attribute which has been blamed by the Lawgiver. However, they do not see anything beyond the works they perform. They have no knowledge of the states *(aḥwāl)* and the stations *(maqāmāt),* nor do they possess the God-given sciences from Him, nor the mysteries, nor unveilings, nor anything of what is found by others. These are called the worshippers *(al-ʿubbād).*
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:34.28, FMIA5 (4:309) p.50, SPK p.373*

In fact, he adds, the worshipper is afraid of the workings of his own ego and lower mind *(nafs):*

> If anyone should come to ask them for a prayer, one of them may well chide him or say, "What thing am I that I should pray for you? What position have I?" He is wary lest he be stricken by self-satisfaction. He fears the calamities of the ego *(nafs)* and that making a show should enter into that. If one of them should busy himself with reading, his book will be the *Riʿāyah* of al-Muḥāsibī (*d.*857)[1] or something of the same genre *(i.e.* books concerning devotional attitudes *etc.).*
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:34.28, FMIA5 (4:309) p.50, SPK p.373*

Ibn al-ʿArabī goes on to describe how the worshippers *(ʿubbād)* are known to people by their external observances. Sufis also are known by their miracles, and other external demonstrations and expressions of their nearness to God, but the highest of all, he says, are those who merge with the ordinary people, remaining unrecognized, and yet are all the time with God, seeing Him in everything:

> They do not differentiate themselves from the faithful who perform God's obligatory practices by any additional state by which they might be recognized. They walk in the marketplace, they talk to people, yet none of God's creatures sees any one of them as differing from the common people by a single thing; they add nothing to the obligatory practices or to the *Sunnah* that are customary among common folk. They are alone with God, firmly rooted, not wavering from their servanthood for the blink of an eye. They find no flavour in leadership, since Lordship has overcome their hearts, and they are lowly before it.
>
> God has given them understanding of appropriate practices and

> states, and of how everything has its place. They are veiled from creatures, and stay concealed from them by the covering of the common people. For they are sincere and purely devoted servants of their Master. They witness Him constantly in their eating and drinking, their waking and sleeping, and their talking with Him among the people.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:34.28, FMIA5 (4:309) p.51; cf. SPK p.374*

See also: ʿ**ārif**, **zāhid**.

1. Al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Riʿāyah li-Ḥuqūq Allāh.*

**abrār**, **al-** (A/P) (sg. *barr*) *Lit.* the righteous, the pious, the holy, the just; a rank among the hierarchy of the *awliyā'* (friends of God, holy men); the seven righteous ones described in the Sufi classification of holy men; a term taken from the *Qur'ān,* where it is a general term for those who lead good lives:

> As for the righteous *(al-abrār),*
> they shall drink of a cup mixed with camphor:
> A gushing Fountain
> at which the servants of God *(ʿibādullāhi)* shall drink.
>
> *Qur'ān 76:5–6; cf. AYA, KPA*

According to Hujwīrī, the seven *abrār* are "officers" of the "divine court" presided over by the *quṭb* (pole, axis), the most spiritualized living being of the time, and the head of all the friends of God. Other "officers" are the three hundred *akhyār* (the good), the forty *abdāl* (substitutes), the four *awtād* (supports), and the three *nuqabā'* (leaders).[1] All of them live in the world, helping to maintain its existence and stability.

Sufis have categorized the *awliyā'* in various other ways. Anṣārī lists the *abrār* among those who "combat the *nafs* (lower mind)":

> Those who combat the *nafs* are threefold: those who strive and are among the righteous *(abrār),* those who find and are among the supports *(awtād),* and those who are liberated and are among the substitutes *(abdāl).*
>
> *Anṣārī, Ṣad Maydān, SMA p.22; cf. in SSE3 p.122*

Tahānawī cites a number of differing texts, including the *Khulāṣat al-Manāqib* ('Epitome of the Paths'), which speaks of seven *akhyār* living in Egypt; seventy *nujabā'* living in the West; forty *abdāl* in Sham (roughly present-day Syria, Jordan, Israel and Palestine); seven *abrār* in Ḥijāz (now in west Saudi Arabia, along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba); five *ʿumdah* (pillars),

described as the foundation of the world's stability; four *awtād,* who maintain equilibrium in the world; three *nuqabā',* who serve as elders of the Islamic community; and the one *quṭb.*[2] Other accounts vary to some extent as to the actual categories, the numbers in each, their geographical locations, and so on.

Referring to the *Qur'ān,* Rūmī uses the term in a general sense to mean the mystics who "drink" from the divine "Fountain" and the "cup" of eternity. If human beings are so restless for the meaningless things of this world, how much more should they be restless for the eternity of God:

> Union with this world is separation from that world:
> the health of this body is the sickness of the spirit.
> Hard is separation from this transitory abode:
> know, then, that separation from that permanent abode is harder.
> Since it is hard for you to be separated from the form:
> how hard must it be to be parted from your Maker!
> Since you lack the patience to do without the vile world:
> how, O friend, have you the patience to do without God?
> Since you lack the patience to do without this black water:
> how have you the patience to do without God's Fountain?
> Since you are so restless without this worldly drink:
> how can you remain apart from "the righteous *(abrār)*",
> and from what "they shall drink"?[3]
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3209–14; cf. MJR4 p.449*

See also: **abdāl**, **awtād**, **quṭb**.

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIV, *KMM* p.269, *KM* p.214.
2. *Khulāṣat al-Manāqib,* in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.57; *cf.* in *SSE6* p.23.
3. *Qur'ān* 76:5.

**āchārya** (S/H), **ācariya** (Pa), **āshélí** (C), **ajari** (J), **ajahn** (Thai) *Lit.* one who teaches (rules of) conduct *(āchāra);* teacher, instructor, preceptor, mentor; a teacher of any kind, but especially of a religious or philosophical system, generally carrying the connotation of one who is learned and knowledgable; in Jainism, a mendicant leader; often used as a title or a suffix to an individual's name, as in the *Advaita* Vedantist Shankarāchārya (*c.*788–820), the second-century (CE) Buddhist teacher Āchārya Nāgārjuna, or the Jain mendicant leader Hemachandrāchārya (1089–1172 CE). Spiritual masters of the Chinese and Japanese *Tendai* (C. *Tiāntái*) and *Shingon* (C. *Zhēnyán*) schools of Buddhism were also called *āshélí* (C) and *ajari.* The Thai *ajahn* is also spelled *acān* and *ajān.*

An *āchārya* is one who knows and teaches established rules of conduct *(āchāra).* In Hinduism, he also invests young members of the *brāhmaṇ* and *kshatriya* (warrior) castes with the sacrificial thread *(janeu, yajñopavīta),* and imparts knowledge of the *Vedas* and other scriptures to them. In the *Mahābhārata,* Droṇa the *āchārya* teaches the art of war to the princes of both the opposing armies.

The *Manu Smṛiti* or *Laws of Manu,* a text that lays down the basic Hindu code of conduct for people in all walks of life, is known especially for its decrees concerning the now-illegal caste system. Manu refers to the Hindu tradition, prevalent among the three higher castes, according to which every individual was expected to adopt a teacher *(āchārya).* In this context, the *āchārya* was not necessarily or specifically a mystical teacher. He would teach the knowledge of the *Vedas,* and the correct way to perform Vedic rites. He would give the sacred *gāyatrī mantra,* and – according to the degree of his own understanding – would teach the disciple the knowledge of *Brahman (brahmavidyā).* He might also give the disciple a personal *mantra* for use in meditation, teach him how to meditate, and monitor his practice. He would check whether the disciple was reciting the sacred scriptures and uttering the *mantra* with correct intonation. The *āchārya* was all-important, and the *Manu Smṛiti* contains a number of verses in which the student is instructed to pay reverence to his teacher *(āchārya):*

> (A student) shall first reverentially greet the one from whom he receives (knowledge), regarding worldly affairs, the *Vedas,* or *Brahman.*... Whether ordered by his *guru* or without command, he shall always exert himself in study and in serving his teacher *(āchārya).* Controlling his body, his speech, his sense organs and his mind, let him stand with joined hands, looking at the face of his *guru.*
>
> *Manu Smṛiti 2:117, 191–92*

Several Indian terms are used for teachers. In common parlance, *adhyāpaka, āchārya, upādhyāya, guru* and *swāmī* all mean a teacher, though, strictly speaking, they are not synonymous. An *adhyāpaka* is an instructor especially of the *Vedas,* but also of grammar, logic, and so on. According to the *Vishṇu Smṛiti,*[1] there are two kinds of *adhyāpakas: āchāryas* and *upādhyāyas.* An *upādhyāya* is a sub-teacher or tutor, and is lower in the hierarchy of teachers than an *āchārya.* A *swāmī* is generally a spiritual teacher. In the *Vedas* and other Sanskrit literature, the term used for a spiritual teacher or a mystic sage is *ṛishi.*

Although *āchārya* and *guru* are both used for spiritual teachers, and may sometimes be used synonymously, *āchārya* is an older term than *guru.* Satyakāma, one of the characters in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad,* observes that the way to God is learnt from a spiritual *āchārya:*

> I have heard from those like your good self
> that only knowledge learnt from a teacher *(āchārya)*
> leads to the highest good (*i.e.* God).
>
> *Chhāndogya Upanishad 4:9.3; cf. U4 p.235*

The *Advaya-Tāraka Upanishad* depicts the nature of a true *āchārya:*

> He is an *āchārya* who is well versed in the *Vedas,* who is a true devotee of *Vishṇu,* who is devoid of jealousy, who knows *yoga,* who takes his stand on *yoga,* who always has his being in *yoga;* and who is pure, who is full of devotion to his *guru,* who especially knows the *Purusha* (Lord). He who is possessed of these qualities is known as a *guru.*
>
> *Advaya-Tāraka Upanishad 14–15; cf. YU pp.7–8*

Ramakrishna also observes that a true *āchārya* is given a divine appointment to teach:

> The task of an *āchārya* is very difficult. Public instruction cannot be imparted without having direct commandment from the Lord.... After receiving His commandment, one can become an *āchārya* and deliver a lecture anywhere. He who receives His commandment also receives power from Him. He can then perform the difficult task of an *āchārya.*
>
> *Ramakrishna, in Kathāmṛita 1:4.5; cf. SRK1*

Swami Vivekananda, a disciple of Ramakrishna, points out that the life of a divinely appointed *āchārya* is not easy:

> Anyone and everyone cannot be an *āchārya;* but many may become *mukta* (liberated). The whole world seems like a dream to the liberated, but the *āchārya* has to take up his stand between the two states. He must have the knowledge that the world is true, or else why should he teach? Again, if he has not realized the world as a dream, then he is no better than an ordinary man, and what could he teach? The *guru* has to bear the disciple's burden of sin; and that is the reason why diseases and other ailments appear even in the bodies of powerful *āchāryas.* But if he be imperfect, they attack his mind also, and he falls. So it is a difficult thing to be an *āchārya.*
>
> It is easier to become a *jīvanmukta* (liberated in this life) than to be an *āchārya.* For the former knows the world as a dream and has no concern with it; but an *āchārya* knows it as a dream, and yet has to remain in it and work. It is not possible for everyone to be an *āchārya.* He is an *āchārya* through whom the divine power acts. The body in which one becomes an *āchārya* is very different from that of any other

> man. There is a science for keeping that body in a perfect state. His is the most delicate organism, very susceptible, capable of feeling intense joy and intense suffering. He is abnormal.
>
> *Swami Vivekananda, On Bhakti Yoga, CWSV5 pp.268–69*

In South India, *āchārya* is an epithet applied to a number of Tamil mystics, devotees and philosophers who were a major influence in the *bhakti* tradition of medieval times, beginning with the devotional poet-saints known as the *ālvārs* (those immersed in God) who flourished from the sixth to the ninth centuries CE. Teachers such as the Tamil philosopher Rāmānujāchārya (*c.*1017–1137) and the Kerala philosopher Shankarāchārya (*c.*788–820) are also generally regarded as *āchāryas,* together with various other well-known medieval luminaries of Hindu philosophy, such as Madhvāchārya (*c.*1197–1276), Nimbārka (C13th), and Vallabhāchārya (*c.*1481–1533).

In Buddhism, an *āchārya* is one of the two monastic teachers assigned to a novice (masc. *shrāmaṇera,* fem. *shrāmaṇerikā*), the other being an *upādhyāya* (preceptor). The *āchārya* teaches the *Dharma,* while the *upādhyāya* teaches monastic discipline and rules. The *āchārya* teaches the inner and more spiritual side, while the *upādhyāya* teaches the external aspects of monastic life. The term *āchārya* is also associated with teachers of tantric Buddhism. The *Vairochana-Abhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* describes the qualities of such an *āchārya:*

> First, the *āchārya* should have generated the *bodhi*-mind (enlightened mind); he should have wondrous wisdom and compassion, combine various arts, be well skilled in the cultivation of *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of wisdom), have mastered the three vehicles, fully comprehended the true meaning of *mantras* (recitation formulae), know the minds of beings, have faith in the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas,* have received the consecrations for transmitting the teachings, and so on, and be well versed in the drawing of a *maṇḍala* (sacred circle); by nature he should be adaptable and free from self-attachment, and he should have duly gained decisiveness in the practice of *mantras,* have thoroughly practised *yoga,* and dwell in the intrepid *bodhi*-mind.… Such an exemplary *āchārya* is extolled by the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas.*
>
> *Vairochana-Abhisaṃbodhi Sūtra 2, T18 838:4a–b; cf. VSSG pp.17–18*

In Jainism, an *āchārya* is a leader of a community *(sangha)* of monks, one who has merited the position through mastery of the scriptures and the ability to follow them. He may be appointed or elected to the position, and he has the right to discourse and interpret from the scriptures, to impose penances for any infringement of the mendicant vows, and to appoint a successor. He also has the right to initiate or ordain new monks, although ordination can be given

by any fully ordained monk. Some mendicant orders, particularly among the *Shvetāmbara Mūrtipūjakas* (image worshippers), may have more than one *āchārya,* of which one, the *gachchhādhipati,* is the principal. Traditionally, the role of *āchārya* was always given to a man, although in more recent times a nun was appointed as *āchārya* to one of the *Sthānakavāsī* lineages.[2]

*Āchāryas* are one of the *pañcha-parameshṭhin* five great beings invoked in the Jain *namaskāra mantra,* an ancient Prakrit sacred formula used as a prayer of homage, obeisance and salutation to the *pañcha-parameshṭhin* who are deemed worthy of worship, namely, *arahantas* (enlightened ones), *siddhas* (perfected, liberated ones), *āchāryas, upādhyāyas* (teachers, preceptors), and *sādhus* (ordinary Jain mendicants).

Five codes of conduct *(āchāras)* are expected of a Jain *āchārya:*

> That sage who attaches himself and others to the practice of *vīrya* (strength), *chāritra* (conduct) and *tapa* (austerity, discipline), and in whom *darshana* (faith) and *jñāna* (knowledge) are predominant, is to be meditated upon as an *āchārya.*
>
> *Dravya Sangraha 52; cf. DSNS p.78*

T.K. Tukol explains:

> The *āchārya* who is to be meditated upon is one who practises five kinds of conduct. The five *āchāras* are *darshanāchāra, jñānāchāra, chāritrāchāra, tapāchāra,* and *vīryāchāra. Darshanāchāra* consists in cultivating faith in the soul which consists of supreme Consciousness, and is the only thing to be meditated upon as it is separate from the body. *Jñānāchāra* consists in developing knowledge that the soul is pure and perfect, and that it has nothing to do with attachment, delusion, or aversion. *Chāritrāchāra* consists in moulding one's own conduct by freeing it from all kinds of attachments and other disturbing factors, so that the mind can have the necessary calm and tranquillity for peaceful contemplation on the nature of soul. *Tapāchāra* is practising various kinds of penances and austerities, so as to enable the soul to attain its true nature. *Vīryāchāra* consists in the development of one's own power or inherent strength of all the mental faculties, so that the soul feels no hindrance in self-realization. An *āchārya* who preaches and practises these qualities is worthy of respect and veneration.
>
> *T.K. Tukol, Compendium of Jainism, CJTT p.70*

The *Digambara* tradition of Jainism lists further attributes and virtues expected of the *pañcha-parameshṭhin.* For the *sādhu,* there are twenty-seven; for the *upādhyāya,* twenty-five; for an *āchārya,* thirty-six; for a *siddha,* eight; and for an *arahanta,* twelve. The thirty-six characteristics and practices

required of an *āchārya* include the six external austerities (*bāhya tapas,* concerning food, toleration of pain, and occupying minimal space), the six internal austerities (*abhyantara tapas,* repentance, humility, selfless service, study of scriptures, meditation, minimal physical activity), the ten virtues (*dharmas,* forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, contentment, truthfulness, control of the senses, austerities, charity, non-possessiveness, celibacy), the six essential duties (*āvashyakas,* which include prayer, and other things already listed), the three controls (*guptis,* control of body, speech, and mind), and the five codes of conduct *(āchāras).*[3]

See also: **Indian Philosophy** (1.11.6), **tapas** (▸3), **upādhyāya**.

1. *Vishṇu Smṛiti* 29:1–2.
2. See "ācārya," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*
3. *Jain Philosophy and Practice, JPP1.*

**adam ha-shalem** (He) *Lit.* the whole *(ha-shalem)* man *(adam);* the perfect or complete human being in whom all things are in balance – the spiritual with the physical, the mental, and the emotional; a holy man, a prophet; also, a spiritual master who is sent by God to convey His message, and who acts on His behalf; a term used by Abraham Abulafia (C13th) and Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto (C18th) for a spiritually realized person who has merged his consciousness in God, who has become whole or perfected and has absorbed all the divine qualities; sometimes used for *Adam Kadmon,* the primal Adam, the cosmic or macrocosmic man regarded as the archetype of both man and creation.

*Shalem* (whole) is a biblical term referring to the purity of heart that is essential when approaching God. This purity implies being at peace and harmony with the divine will. It arises from total selflessness, loss of ego through love and devotion, and acceptance of the divine will. It is understood as an elevated spiritual state:

> Let your heart therefore be perfect *(shalem)* with the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments, as at this day.
>
> *1 Kings 8:61, JCL*

> Nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect *(shalem)* with the Lord all his days.
>
> *1 Kings 15:14, KB*

Some kabbalists, such as the thirteenth-century Abraham Abulafia, took the concept of the perfect man and gave it an esoteric and symbolic interpretation,

correlating it to the kabbalist description of the projection of the divine power from the Godhead into the creation as a series of emanations or levels known as the *sefirot.* These emanations or qualities represent the projection of the undifferentiated divine power into the material realm of duality, in which the divine Unity separates into positive and negative forces. This duality of positive and negative is often represented within the microcosm of the body as two columns – positive (the active, masculine principle) and negative (the receptive, feminine principle). The kabbalists believed that the exchange of energies between the two columns resulted in an ongoing renewal and harmonizing of bodily energies.

The perfect man is beyond duality, and the joining of the energies of the *sefirot* symbolizes the notion that the perfect man is both male and female, that he embodies both the positive and the negative. When such a man rises above duality, he literally becomes the "throne" of God – God manifests within him.[1]

In his *Imrei Shefer* ('Beautiful Utterances'), Abulafia likens the concept of the perfect man to an angelic divine being who sits on the heavenly throne next to, or just below, the level of God. He has become filled by the divine influx and has raised his consciousness to the Divine, attaining the vision of the "glory of God".[2] In that sense, Abulafia understands the perfect man as a divine being.

The notion of the perfect man is akin to the concept of the *Adam Kadmon* (the primal Adam), the macrocosm that contains the microcosm. He is literally *ha-adam* (the man) *ha-shalem* (complete) – the whole or complete *adam* or man. At the time of creation, man was whole – a harmonious and integrated unity of all tendencies, all dualities, all opposites. He existed in the Garden of Eden – symbolically, a state of unity in which he drew spiritual sustenance from the Tree of Life. After Adam's sin of 'eating' the fruit of the tree of knowledge or duality (good and evil), he falls from the primal state of grace and enters the creation – the plane of duality. It is also said in the Jewish *midrashim* (narrative commentaries) that the primal Adam could see from one end of the world to the other, and that all the souls ever created were within him. He was thus the perfect or whole man with complete divine knowledge.[3]

In another passage from *Imrei Shefer,* Abulafia uses a vocabulary drawn from the system of the *sefirot* and the related system of numerical symbolism *(gematria)* associated with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In dense and complex language, he says that the divine intention in creating man is for man to comprehend who he truly is – the combination of all ten *sefirot.* The Lord wants human beings to become aware of their divinity, as complete beings:

> In discovering . . . that the beginning of the (divine) name *(Yahweh)* is (the Hebrew letter) *yod* (which also stands for the number 10), we know

> immediately that the purpose of the (divine) intention in the existence of man is that he comprehend himself and his essence, which is in the form of *yod* according to its form.
>
> *Elliot Wolfson, "Kenotic Overflow," in SIEW p.136*

Abulafia continues by saying that the perfect man *(ha-adam ha-shalem)* contains everything within himself. In him are manifest both the male and female *sefirot* (divine emanations) which all come together in the lowest *sefirah,* which is the *Shekhinah,* the 'feminine' aspect of God.

It is through the *Shekhinah* that the Divine is known in creation. In Abulafia's philosophy, the *Shekhinah* also represents the active intelligence *(sekhel ha-poʿel),* the highest level of ordinary human consciousness, which receives the divine Spirit or Intelligence *(ha-Sekhel ha-elohi)* as it flows into a human being.

The *yod,* the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first letter of the divine name *Yahweh,* is also used for the number ten. It "alludes symbolically to the decade of souls or *sefirot* that converge in the tenth *(sefirah).*" In other words, deciphering Abulafia's complex symbolism, the perfect or complete man is represented by the *yod,* because all the ten *sefirot* – all the divine qualities and the entire creation – are gathered within him. In this way, the perfect man "gathers everything".[4]

Abulafia's thought was influenced by the Arabic-speaking Jewish philosopher Maimonides, who uses the Sufi term *al-insān al-kāmil* (perfect man) and was likewise familiar with the metaphysical writings of Maimonides' contemporary, the Andalusian Sufi Ibn al-ʿArabī. Abulafia was convinced that he himself was a perfect man, sent to fulfil a messianic role:

> Abulafia, in a manner similar to Ibn al-ʿArabī, links external events with internal processes as the macrocosm and the microcosm come together. Although Abulafia's conception of the perfect man is essentially Maimonidean, he, like Ibn al-ʿArabī, sees the external historical circumstances as mirroring internal processes within man; thus, external redemption goes hand in hand with internal perfection. . . .
>
> For Abulafia, the redemption is something that happens in three dimensions – the heavenly, the historical, and the individual. Abulafia is convinced that he himself brings together these three dimensions: he is the seal of the seventh day, the king-messiah, who receives the divine efflux (outward flow); he is the historical messiah who will bring the exile to an end; and he is, like Ibn al-ʿArabī, the perfect man in that he has reached the highest stage of prophecy and has perfect knowledge of the divine Name.
>
> *Harvey Hames, Seal Within a Seal, SSHH pp.162–64*

For Abulafia, the messiah refers both to the individual who redeems the Jews from political exile, and to the entirely heavenly or spiritual Active Intelligence (divine creative power), which is the true redeemer of the soul. In another work, written in 1285, Abulafia makes an intriguing statement:

> "Seal within a seal, the engraving of the seal," "*Yahweh* is the man of war, *Yahweh* is His Name."[5] My intention, with regard to everything I have written in this book up to now, was to get to what I shall reveal to you here.
>
> *Abraham Abulafia, Ozar 'Eden Ganuz, OEGG p.368, in SSHH p.166*

In his commentary, Harvey Hames remarks that "the 'seal within a seal' is a Jewish legal *(halakhic)* term used in the context of wine and how it should be sealed so as not to become 'wine touched by gentile hands', and therefore unfit for drinking by Jews." Abulafia uses the imagery differently. Hames continues:

> Abulafia, however, uses this imagery to equate the perfect man *(adam ha-shalem)* with the *Torah,* which is the innermost seal. Man is the microcosm in that he contains the whole world; the most perfect man, Abulafia himself, is the "seal within the seal" because he knows how to read the *Torah.* The "seal within the seal" is the perfection of knowledge, which comes about when acquiring the seventh and highest level of reading the biblical text, which Abulafia achieved in late 1285. This is the seal which seals all other forms of knowledge, which are the stepping-stones on the way to achieving this level. This seventh level, the level of prophecy, implies knowledge that every letter in the *Torah* is a Name of God and means that the person has achieved the highest spiritual attainments possible, and reached the level of prophecy.
>
> *Harvey Hames, A Seal Within a Seal, SSHH pp.166–67*

Some centuries later, eighteenth-century kabbalist and ethicist Rabbi Moshe Ḥayyim Luzzatto uses the term *ha-adam ha-shalem* to describe someone who ascends to the level of spiritual realization where he will unite himself with his Creator, and "glow in the light of life". This comes about when he has overcome the influence of his worldly desires and negative tendencies, and has invested his worship with a deep inner devotion. He adds that service to an *adam ha-shalem* is greatly uplifting. In his book of moral guidance, *Mesillat Yesharim* ('The Path of the Upright'), Luzzatto writes:

> The Holy One, blessed be He, has put man in a place where the factors which draw him further from the Blessed One are many. These are

> the earthy desires which, if he is pulled after them, cause him to be drawn further from and to depart from the true good. It is seen, then, that man is veritably placed in the midst of a raging battle. For all the affairs of the world, whether for the good or for the bad, are trials to a man: poverty on the one hand and wealth on the other, as Solomon said: "Lest I become satiated and deny, saying, 'Who is God?' or lest I become impoverished and steal."[6] Serenity on the one hand and suffering on the other, so that the battle rages against him to the fore and to the rear. If he is valorous, and victorious on all sides, he will be the whole man *(ha-adam ha-shalem),* who will succeed in uniting himself with his Creator, and he will leave the corridor to enter into the palace (the spiritual realms), to glow in the light of life. To the extent that he has subdued his evil inclination and his desires, and withdrawn from those factors which draw him further from the Good, and exerted himself to become united with It, to that extent will he attain It and rejoice in It.
>
> If you look more deeply into the matter, you will see that the world was created for man's use. In truth, man is the centre of a great balance. For if he is pulled after the world and is drawn further from his Creator, he is damaged, and he damages the world with him. And if he rules over himself and unites himself with his Creator, and uses the world only to aid him in the service of his Creator, he is uplifted and the world itself is uplifted with him. For all creatures are greatly uplifted when they serve the whole man *(ha-adam ha-shalem),* who is sanctified with the holiness of the Blessed One.
>
> *Moshe Ḥayyim Luzzatto, Mesillat Yesharim, MYPJ pp.19–21*

Luzzatto adds that man's purpose in creation is to realize his spiritual nature, not to pursue worldly benefit:

> To summarize, a man was created not for his station in this world, but for his station in the world to come. It is only that his station in this world is a means towards his station in the world to come, which is the ultimate goal. This accounts for numerous statements of our sages of blessed memory, all in a similar vein, likening this world to the place and time of preparation (of food), and the next world to the place which has been set aside for rest and for the eating of what has already been prepared.
>
> *Moshe Ḥayyim Luzzatto, Mesillat Yesharim, MYPJ pp.21–23*

The perfect man, therefore, has risen above his negative tendencies; he is not held in thrall by his emotions or senses. He has control over his mind; he has achieved equanimity. As such he has risen to a state of completeness. That

is, he has risen above the duality of life on this plane of opposites: pain and pleasure, good and evil, action and reaction, and so forth. He is the same as the rest of mankind – potentially one with God – the only difference being that he has realized his potential.

It is also believed that the person who adheres to the biblical commandments uplifts the whole world – meaning that the perfect or whole man brings spiritual light, the holiness of God, to the entire world:

> (He) carries something of the holiness associated with God, which itself is drawn from the light stored up in the world to come for the righteous. Thus, once again, we see the fluidity of this idea, where the world to come is not temporal but more a state of being. The light of the righteous – which is the light God created in the beginning, before the sun and moon were created, to provide the earth with light – is usually associated with the world to come. Here, that light is accessible in and from this world when the 'whole person' is able to uplift the world.
>
> *Ira Stone, Mesillat Yesharim, Introduction, MYPU p.22*

See also: **Adam Kadmon** (5.2), **ish Elohim**, **sefirot** (4.1).

1. See *Biblioteca Apostolica,* Ms. Vatican Ebr. 504:312b, 308b, in *CSEW* p.83.
2. Abraham Abulafia, *Imrei Shefer, ISAA fol.*48, in *MEAA* p.107.
3. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ḥagigah* 12a; *Midrash, Genesis Rabbah* 24:2; *Mishnah Avot* 5:2.
4. Elliott Wolfson, *Kenotic Overflow,* in *SIEW* p.137.
5. *Exodus* 15:3.
6. *Proverbs* 30:9.

**adept**, **mystic adept**, **perfect adept**, **spiritual adept** (Gk. *eudaimōn, spoudaios*)
One who is adept or accomplished in spiritual practice; one who has attained some degree of spiritual enlightenment; a mystic; a term used especially of advanced souls of various spiritual and occult paths, from East and West, from both mainstream religions and lesser known paths; often used in translation of equivalent terms in other languages.

The Greek *spoudaios* also means 'mature and earnest person' or 'good man', and is used by Aristotle for someone who has become the standard of goodness to other human beings.[1] Other authors, such as the Stoics and Plotinus, use *spoudaios* for the sage or adept in a more spiritual or mystical sense. Such an adept, says Plotinus, sees life from a far higher perspective than the ordinary man, and is not affected by its ups and downs:

> We must remember that the adept *(spoudaios)* sees things very differently from the average man; neither ordinary experiences nor pains and

> sorrows, whether concerning himself or others, pierce the inner fortress. To allow them any such passage would be weakness in the soul.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 1:4.8; cf. PEC p.16*

Nor does the behaviour and attitude of his fellow human beings drag him down:

> The absurdities of his neighbours, however near, cannot plunge the adept *(eudaimōn)* into evil: his state cannot hang upon the fortunes, good or bad, of any other men.
>
> *Plotinus, Enneads 1:4.7; cf. PEC p.16*

In the Christian tradition, speaking of the devotee's early morning meditation, Hesychios the Priest writes that an adept is one who readily understand spiritual mysteries. By "watchful", he means being inwardly vigilant, mindful, and aware:

> If you are an adept, initiated into the mysteries and standing before God at dawn,[2] you will divine the meaning of my words. Otherwise be watchful and you will discover it.
>
> *Hesychios the Priest, On Watchfulness and Holiness 9, Philokalia, PCT1 p.164*

Similarly, Bernard of Clairvaux admits that while part of his duty is to deliver sermons, there are adepts who understand the spiritual mysteries better than he; but they may prefer to remain silent:

> I should prefer you to hear it from an adept, from one accustomed to and experienced in these things. A person of this kind, however, chooses rather to hide in modest silence what he has perceived in silence, to keep his secret to himself as the safer course. But as one bound in duty to speak, . . . I relate to you whatever I know on this subject from my own or from others' experience. Since many can easily verify it, I leave deeper truths to those competent to comprehend them.
>
> *Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 57:5, WBC3 p.100*

Mystics of various traditions have sometimes classified seekers of God into three categories: beginners, wayfarers or travellers on the path, and the perfected. Christian mystics of medieval Spain, for instance, such as Fray Francisco de Osuna, spoke of the *principiantes* (beginners), the *aprovechantes* or *aprovechados* (progressives), and the *perfectos* (adepts, proficient, perfect).[3]

Speaking of a deep and concentrated inner recollection in which the individual becomes completely forgetful of himself, Fray Francisco says that "this recollection . . . is of the greatest virtue, and with the adept it becomes a

habit."[4] Using these three terms, Tomás de Jesús says on the title page of his *Treatise on Mental Prayer* that one of his aims is to describe the three states "which are commonly called those of beginners, proficients, and adepts".[5] Just as the natures of the three differ, so do the spiritual exercises recommended for them, and so too do their aims, as they pass from one stage to the next:

> Beginners *(principiantes)* as a rule seek favours and consolations, and consider their own good more than that which is solely the glory of God. Progressives *(aprovechados)* are more detached and seek virtues rather than consolations, endeavouring to know God that they may love and serve Him. But the adepts *(perfectos),* forgetting themselves and their comforts, love God for Himself, seeking only that which is to His greater glory and, for love of Him, desiring to suffer and bear the cross and forgo their own comfort and spiritual quiet that they may help to save their neighbours, to the sole end that God may be served and glorified.
>
> *Tomás de Jesús, On Mental Prayer 2:5, SCGO pp.65–66, in SSM2 p.231*

Álvarez de Paz, who also uses the same familiar tripartite division, describes how the awakening of the feelings of love during prayer develops from stage to stage. Beginners have to awaken their love by meditations on the Passion of Jesus; progressives, while continuing such meditations, are moving towards a more personal experience of the Divine; and the elect, due to their continuous practice of the presence of God, find that love is immediately kindled in their hearts as soon as they turn to prayer. The first two stages still rely upon intellect and imagination, while the elect are drawn more automatically by their inherent "will" or sense of spiritual direction.[6]

John of the Cross, who depicts the evolution of the soul's love for the divine Beloved in his *Spiritual Canticle,* portraying it as the spiritual marriage, explains that his poem speaks first of the beginners, who follow the "purgative way"; then of the progressives, who follow the "illuminative way", where the spiritual betrothal is made; and finally the elect or perfect, who know the "unitive way", and reach "the beatific estate, to which only the soul in that perfect estate aspires".[7]

See also: **sage**.

1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3:4, 10:5, *NEA* pp.58–59, 260.
2. *Cf. Psalms* 5:3.
3. *E.g.* Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 14:7, *NBA16* p.482, in *SSM1* pp.90–91.
4. *E.g.* Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet* 21:7, *NBA16* p.570*ff.,* in *SSM1* p.86.

5. Tomás de Jesús, *On Mental Prayer,* title page, in *SSM2* p.226.
6. Álvarez de Paz, *Opera, OSSO4 col.*1385, in *SSM3* p.205.
7. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle* Argument:2, *CWJC2* p.185.

**Ādi-Buddha** (S), **dang po'i sangs rgyas**, **ye nas sangs rgyas** (T), **běnchū fó** (C), **honshobutsu** (J) *Lit.* primordial *(ādi, dang po'i, ye nas, běnchū, honsho) buddha (sangs rgyas, fó, butsu);* first or original *buddha;* the self-existent, uncreated, self-emanating, self-originating *buddha,* beyond mental concepts and verbal definitions, without beginning or end, pre-existing everything else that exists; the foundation of all; the primordial Essence of enlightenment; also called *Vajradhara;* generally depicted in icons as dark blue; a concept associated mostly with the later *Mahāyāna* tradition and particularly with *Vajrayāna* or tantric Buddhism, especially of Tibet; regarded in Hindu Vaishnavite sources as the *original form of* the historical Buddha, who is included among the ten *avatāras* of *Vishṇu.*

Although the closest Buddhist concept to that of a single supreme deity, the *Ādi-Buddha* is regarded more as the source or originator than the creator, though the difference between the two may be little more than a matter of human concepts. The *Ādi-Buddha* is understood to emanate all things rather than to create them as something separate. The *Ādi-Buddha* is at the centre of a pantheon of deities, both wrathful and peaceful, which are regarded as its reflections. All *buddhas* and many of the mythologized, celestial *bodhisattvas* are believed to have emanated from the *Ādi-Buddha,* a number of whom are regarded as the 'personality' of the *Ādi-Buddha* and often identified with the *dharmakāya* – the unborn, uncreated Reality-'body' of a *buddha.*

The names most frequently associated with the *Ādi-Buddha* are the *bodhisattvas* Samantabhadra ('Universally Beneficent'), Vajradhara ('Holding a Thunderbolt'), and Vairochana ('From the Sun', 'Illuminator'). Others include Amitābha ('Unmeasured Splendour'), Vajrasattva ('Heart of Adamant'), and Akshobhya ('Immovable'). In Tibet, Samantabhadra is depicted as the source of both *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death) and *nirvāṇa* (extinction of desire, tranquillity) or *bodhi* (enlightenment).

The *Ādi-Buddha* is a concept central to the *Kālachakra* ('Wheel of Time') school of *Vajrayāna* of North India and Tibet, which arose around the tenth century CE. *Ādi-Buddha* is also a name used for a lost tantric text of the *Kālachakra* school, whose full title is the *Paramādibuddha.* There are two main extant *Kālachakra* texts, both surviving in the original Sanskrit and Tibetan translations: the primary *Kālachakra Tantra* and the *Vimalaprabhā,* which is a commentary on both the *Paramādibuddha* and the *Kālachakra Tantra.* In these sources, the *Ādi-Buddha* is depicted as that which is supremely and ultimately transcendent. It is variously described as omniscient *(sarvajña),* uncreated and without end, without beginning in time and without

termination, unchanging or indestructible, beyond origination and dissolution, supreme *(parama),* the supreme Unchanging *(Paramākshara),* without qualities, non-dual, primal non-dual wisdom, beyond mental conception, unchanging bliss *(akshara-sukha),* without causal connection *(niranvaya),* endless *Buddha,* progenitor of the *buddhas,* progenitor or emanator of the five *jinas* or *dhyāni buddhas* who represent the five qualities of the Buddha, pure *yoga (shuddha yoga),* indivisible *vajra yoga,* and also the one who first *(ādi)* obtained buddhahood (*i.e.* the historical Buddha).[1]

See also: **Samantabhadra** (▸1), **Vairochana** (▸1), **Vajradhara** (▸1).

1. Edward Arnold, *As Long as Space Endures, ALSE* pp.204–14.

**afrād**, **al-** (A/P) (sg. *fard, mufrad*) *Lit.* the individuals; the solitaries, the unique ones, the men of singleness; also called *al-mufardūn* (the detached ones);[1] in Sufism, a category of *awliyā'* (friends of God, saints) who have attained the highest realization through revelation of the divine Oneness *(waḥdānīyah),* the level of the Godhead from which emanates the divine creative power, the Primal Intelligence *(al-ʿAql al-Awwal).* Tahānawī says that there are three *afrād,* that their station is higher than the *quṭb al-aqṭāb (quṭb* of *quṭbs),* and that they are said to "possess the heart of ʿAlī", meaning ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Muḥammad's cousin, commonly regarded as the first Sufi.[2] The *quṭb* (pole, axis) is the most spiritualized living being of the time, and the head of all the friends of God.

Ibn al-ʿArabī says that while the spiritual attainment of the *afrād* equals that of the *quṭb,* the *quṭb* has a particular role to play that is not required of the *afrād.* And although the *quṭb* has spiritual dominion over the universe, the *afrād* do not fall within his remit. He likens the *afrād* to the enraptured angels *(al-malā'ikat al-muhayyamūn),* whose rank is equal to that of the Primal Intelligence *(al-ʿAql al-Awwal).* But while the attention of the Primal Intelligence is directed outwards, concerned with the manifestation of the creation, the attention of the *afrād,* like the enraptured angels, is turned solely inward in contemplation of the Divine.[3]

See also: **abdāl**, **quṭb**.

1. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Risālat al-Aqṭāb* 118, in *AMAS* p.878.
2. Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* pp.412–13, in *SSE6* p.27.
3. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 1:93.5, 199–202; 2:19.9, 2:53.14,20, 488.33, 675.6; 3:86.28, 137.12; 4:77.19, *FMIA7* (6:462) p.111; *Muʿjam* 876–78; *cf. SPK* p.413 (n.23).

**Agnus Dei** See **Lamb**.

**agragaṇyā** (S) *Lit.* foremost one; a leader, a head, a principal; a title given to the leader of a group of nuns of the Jain *Shvetāmbara Terāpanthī* tradition, who live and travel together. Unlike her counterpart among the *Shvetāmbara Mūrtipūjakas* (image worshippers), she carries out the instructions of the male *āchārya* (leader), which he generally passes on to her through the *sādhvī pramukhā* (principal nun). The *agragaṇyā* is appointed is for one year, generally renewed by the *āchārya* at the annual meeting of mendicants *(maryādā mahotsava),* at which time the *āchārya* may also redistribute the various group members.[1]

See also: **guruṇī**.

1. See "agragaṇyā," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**ahl** (A/P) (pl. *ahlūn, ahālin*) *Lit.* people; a term often combined with others, where it is commonly translated as 'people of…', 'folk of…', 'men of…', 'followers of…', 'those of…', as in *ahl al-dunyā* (people of the world), *ahl Allāh* (people of God), *ahl al-ṭarīqah* (people of the path, Sufis), *ahl-i ʿibārat* (people of phraseology, verbalists), *ahl-i hazl* (people of jest, scoffers), *ahl-i kār* (people of work, administrators), *ahl al-nār* (people of the fire who will go to hell on the Day of Judgment), and a great many others, mundane, religious and spiritual. Some of the expressions referring to religious and spiritual people, and their opposites, include:

*Ahl al-bāṭin.* People of the internal; followers of the inner spiritual path *(ṭarīqah),* as opposed to *ahl al-ẓāhir* (people of the external), followers of the external aspects of religion *(sharīʿah).* See also: **bāṭin** (▸3).

*Ahl al-dargāh.* People of the court; Sufi initiates.

*Ahl al-dhawq.* People of savour, people of tasting, *dhawq* being a term used in Sufism for the first stages of mystical experience; those who know the 'taste' of spirituality through direct inner experience. See also: **dhawq** (▸3).

*Ahl al-dhikr.* People of remembrance; Sufi masters whose individual selves have been annihilated in the practice of the remembrance *(dhikr)* of God. The term appears in the *Qurʾān,*[1] though in that context it refers to the People of the Book (Jews, Christians, and some others). See also: **dhikr** (▸3).

*Ahl al-faḍl.* People of letters; scholars, theologians.

*Ahl al-fikr.* People of reflection; those who cogitate; intellectuals; also, since *fikr* can sometimes mean spiritual meditation, those who meditate. See also: **fikr** (▸3).

*Ahl al-futuwwah.* People of chivalry *(futuwwah),* understood as valour, altruism, and selfless generosity combined with manliness. See also: **futuwwah** (▸4).

*Ahl al-ḥadīth.* People of the tradition; those who derive their beliefs and conduct from the direct instruction in the *ḥadīth* (traditional sayings and deeds of the Prophet); contrasted with the *ahl al-ra'y* (followers of opinion), who reached conclusions regarding conduct and belief through deductive reasoning and analogy.

*Ahl al-ʿilm.* People of knowledge; those whose path is that of external knowledge; thus, scholars, theologians. See also: **ʿilm** (▸3).

*Ahl al-ḥāl.* People of state *(ḥāl),* implying a mystical state; thus, Sufis who experience mystical states. See also: **ḥāl** (▸3).

*Ahl al-ḥaqā'iq.* People of the realities; seekers of the hidden realities, of the unseen essences, patterns or archetypes underlying the many individual parts and aspects of the creation. See also: **ḥaqā'iq** (5.2).

*Ahl al-himmah.* People of aspirations; those who aspire; spiritual seekers.

*Ahl al-kashf wa al-wujūd.* People of unveiling *(kashf)* and finding *(wujūd).* A term used by Ibn al-ʿArabī for those who have experienced Reality, who have removed the inner veils and have found God. See also: **kashf** (▸3), **wujūd** (2.2).

*Ahl al-khidmah.* People of service; those who see themselves as the selfless servants of the entire creation.

*Ahl al-Kiṭāb.* People of the Book; those who believe in revealed religion, *i.e.* Jews, Christians, *Majūs* (Zoroastrians) and Sabaeans (probably Mandaeans); a term used in many places throughout the *Qur'ān.* See also: **Qur'ān** (1.10).

*Ahl al-maqāmāt.* People of stations; those of mystical stations or stages, a *maqām* (in Sufism) being a level of permanent spiritual attainment;

dwellers in the spiritual stations; Sufis who have lasting mystical experience. See also: **maqām** (4.1).

*Ahl al-minan.* People of favours; the beneficent, the generous.

*Ahl al-muʿāmalah.* People of conduct; those who attach importance to conduct, seeking the appropriate behaviour for all occasions.

*Ahl al-naʿīm.* People of delight; the inhabitants of paradise; from the *Qurʾān,* which speaks of paradise as the *jannat al-naʿīm* (garden of delight).[2]

*Ahl al-nishast.* People who sit in retreat; hermits, solitaries.

*Ahl al-qarābah.* People of nearness; those who are near to God; mystics.

*Ahl al-qiyās.* People of analogy, deduction, or inference; people of argument, those who prove religious points by argument. See also: **qiyās** (▸3).

*Ahl al-rīy, ahl-i rayy.* People of quenching, *rayy* referring to the final stages of mystical experience. See also: **rayy** (▸3).

*Ahl al-ṣafāʾ.* People of purity; pure ones; mystics. See also: **ṣafāʾ** (▸4).

*Ahl al-shuhūd.* People of witnessing, *shuhūd* in a Sufi context implying mystical vision or contemplative vision; thus, those whose mystical vision has been opened. See also: **shuhūd** (▸3).

*Ahl al-shurb.* People of drinking, *shurb* referring to the intermediate stages of mystical experience. See also: **shurb** (▸3).

*Ahl al-sulūk.* People of wayfaring; wayfarers or seekers on the Sufi path who truly travel the inner way. See also: **sulūk** (▸4).

*Ahl al-Sunnah.* People of the law; those who follow Islamic religious law; followers of the *sharīʿah.*

*Ahl al-taḥqīq.* People of enquiry, people of investigation; seekers.

*Ahl al-tamkīn.* People of stability, people of steadfastness; those who have attained a permanent, fixed or established level of spiritual attainment.

*Ahl al-taṣawwuf.* People of Sufism; Sufis.

*Ahl al-tawājud.* People of forced ecstasy *(tawājud);* those who try to induce or imitate ecstasy in an external manner. See also: **tawājud** (▸3).

*Ahl al-ʿuqūl.* People of rational faculties; those who reason; intellectuals. *ʿUqūl* is the plural of *ʿaql* (reason, intelligence, wisdom). See also: ʿ**aql** (5.1).

*Ahl al-wafāʾ.* People of faithfulness; the faithful, those who are faithful followers of the path to God. See also: **wafā**ʾ (▸4).

*Ahl al-wujūdī.* People of finding *(wujūdī);* those who have found the Reality. See also: **wujūd** (2.2, ▸4).

*Ahl al-wujūdī ḥaqīqatan.* People of true *(ḥaqīqatan)* existence *(wujūdī);* those who have realized true Existence; mystics.

1. *Qurʾān* 16:43, 21:7.
2. *Qurʾān* 56:11–12.

**ahl al-baṣar** (A), **ahl-i baṣar** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of vision *(baṣar);* people of inner vision; mystics. Speaking of true mystics, Ḥāfiẓ writes:

> O Ḥāfiẓ, if the desire for union is in your head,
> then become the dust at the doorway
> of the possessor of inner vision *(ahl-i baṣar).*
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.234, DIH p.374; cf. DHWC (510:10) p.837*

**ahl al-dīn** (A), **ahl-i dīn** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of religion *(dīn);* followers of Islam; in the metaphorical language of Rūmī, a saint or mystic:

> Distinguish the friends of the religion *(ahl-i dīn)*
> from the enemies of God (*ahl-i kīn,* people of enmity).
> Seek the man that sits with God, and sit with him.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3719, MJR2 p.202*

**ahl al-duʿā**ʾ (A), **ahl-i duʿā** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of supplication *(duʿāʾ),* people of prayer; Sufis whose recourse is to prayer; contrasted with the *ahl al-riḍāʾ,* who remain content in the divine will and never supplicate for favours. The word *duʿāʾ* is generally used for supplication as distinct from *ṣalāh* (daily prayer) or liturgical forms of prayer. The term comes from the *Qurʾān.*[1]

1. *Qurʾān* 14:40.

**ahl al-Ḥaqīqah** (A), **ahl-i Ḥaqīqat** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of Reality *(Ḥaqīqah),* people of Truth; mystics. Saʿdī says that love has no "shore", unless perhaps it is "His bosom":

> The ocean of love indeed has no shore,
> but if it had, it would be His bosom,
> according to the opinion of the mystics *(ahl-i Ḥaqīqat).*
>
> *Saʿdī, Badāyiʿ 53:2, KSSS p.357; cf. BOS p.58*

Tahānawī writes:

> Mystics *(ahl al-Ḥaqīqah)* have described ecstasy as the expression of the incapacity of the spirit *(rūḥ)* to endure the overwhelming force of yearning because of the sweetness of prayer *(dhikr).*
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 p.293; cf. in SSE1 pp.183–84*

**ahl al-Ḥaqq** (A), **ahl-i Ḥaqq** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of the Real *(al-Ḥaqq);* followers of the Truth; people of God, *al-Ḥaqq* being a common name for God; Sufis who have mystical experience of Reality. Rūzbihān says that a mystic reaches this height when his heart is "cleansed":

> Whenever the cares that preoccupy the heart of the mystic become dispersed and the heart becomes cleansed of the dust of temptation, becoming luminous with the purity of remembrance *(dhikr),* the mystic becomes one of God's people *(ahl al-Ḥaqq)* through selection by pre-eternal love *(maḥabbah),* and attains the station of the mysteries. At this point, the angelic realm *(malakūt)* and the hidden aspect of the realm of ordainment *(jabarūt)* are opened up to him according to his state, capacity, and loving before God.
>
> *Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 8:15, MARB p.153; cf. in SSE7 p.36*

Hujwīrī says that such people often have to face the hostility of the world:

> The path of criticism *(malāmat)* has been trodden by some of the *ṣūfī shaykhs.* Criticism *(malāmat)* has a powerful effect in making love sincere. The followers of the Truth *(ahl-i Ḥaqq)* are distinguished by their becoming the objects of public criticism *(malāmat-i khalq),* especially the eminent ones of the (Sufi) community.
>
> The Messenger (Muḥammad), who is the exemplar and leader of the adherents of the Truth, and who marches at the head of the lovers (of God), was honoured and held in good repute by all until the evidence of the Truth was revealed to him, and inspiration came upon him. Then the people loosed their tongues to criticize him. Some said: "He is a

> soothsayer;" others, "He is a poet;" others, "He is a madman;" others, "He is a liar;" and so forth.[1] And God says, describing the true believers: "They fear no one's criticism *(lawmah):* that is the grace of God, which He bestows on whoever He pleases; God is bounteous and wise."[2]
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb VI, KMM pp.68–69; cf. KM p.62*

*Ahl al-Ḥaqq* is also the name of a dualist sect, with groups throughout Iran and Iraq, who believe that God manifests one primary and seven secondary manifestations in each of the seven epochs of the world. One of these was Muḥammad's cousin (ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib), and another was Sulṭān Suhāk, their own fifteenth-century founder. The sect seems to be closely allied to the *Yazīdīs* of Iraq and is of interest for its belief in transmigration and reincarnation.

1. *Qurʾān* 69:40–43.
2. *Qurʾān* 5:54.

**ahl al-ilhām** (A), **ahl-i ilhām** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of inspiration *(ilhām);* the recipients of spiritual inspiration, the inspired; mystics. To Rūmī, the *ahl-i ilhām* are the perfect saints whose reality is the "Fountain of Life", the divine creative power:

> Those inspired by God *(ahl-i ilhām-i khudā)* are the Fountain of Life:
> those allured by the enticements of sensuality are the poison of death.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:3295, MJR4 p.185*

**Ahl al-Kahf** (A), **Ahl-i Kahf** (P) *Lit.* People *(ahl)* of the Cave *(kahf),* Men of the Cave; referred to in the *Qurʾān;*[1] the Sleepers of Ephesus. According to a traditional legend, the *Ahl al-Kahf* were a band of pious monotheists who were pursued by infidels. Taking refuge in a cave, they fell asleep, remaining so for several centuries until the ungodly had passed away. The entrance to the cave was guarded by the dog, *Qitmīr,* whose fidelity was rewarded – according to some versions of the myth – by his being transformed into a human being. Anṣārī says that although he himself may not be a saint, he stays faithfully at the door of the Beloved:

> O God, I may not be among your saints,
> but like the dog of the Sleepers of Ephesus,
> I am at your gate.
>
> *Anṣārī, Intimate Conversations 1, BWIC p.190*

1. *Qurʾān* 18:9–26.

**ahl al-karāmāt** (A), **ahl-i karāmāt**, **ahl-i karāmat** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of miracles *(karāmāt);* the saints. Manifest miracles (*muʿjizāt,* open manipulations of physical events) are contrasted with concealed or secret miracles (*karāmāt,* secret or hidden miracles that transform the hearts of disciples).

Hujwīrī says that Muḥammad was allowed by God to perform manifest miracles, thereby revealing his inner spiritual status, and was therefore permitted to exhibit the miracle of continuous fasting. The saints *(ahl-i karāmat),* however, are not permitted to reveal themselves in this way:

> The Apostle wrought manifest miracles *(muʿjizāt)* and therefore divulged his continuance in fasting; but he forbade the saints *(ahl-i karāmat)* to divulge it, because a *karāmat* involves concealment, whereas a *muʿjizat* involves revelation.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXI, KMM p.418; cf. KM p.324*

See also: **karāmāt** (7.3).

**ahl al-khalwah** (A), **ahl-i khalvat** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of solitude *(khalwah),* referring both to those who seek outer solitude as well as those who seek inner retreat or detachment from material existence. Ḥāfiẓ says that the Night of Power – towards the end of the month of *Ramaḍān,* when God is believed to shower His blessings unstintingly and many devout Muslims and Sufis keep a vigil, sometimes in solitude – is actually every night:

> What the people of retreat *(ahl-i khalvat)* call
> the Night of Power *(shab-i Qadr)* is tonight.
> O Lord! What constellation is it that heralds such good fortune?
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.10, DIH p.46; cf. DHWC (26:1) p.80*

**ahl Allāh** (A), **ahl-i Allāh** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of *Allāh,* folk of *Allāh;* saints of high spiritual attainment; from the *ḥadīth,* "God has folk (*i.e.* family) among the people: the folk of the *Qurʾān (ahl al-Qurʾān),* who are the folk of *Allāh (ahl Allāh)* and His elect *(khāṣṣah);*"[1] a term commonly used by Ibn al-ʿArabī in contrast to *ahl al-rusūm* (people of forms, people of externals) and *ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm* (knowers of forms), meaning exoteric scholars, scholars of external knowledge, such as the various sciences, and especially the *sharīʿah* (Islamic religious law) and its many ramifications.[2]

Writing about the brilliance of the "elemental lights *(anvār-i ʿunṣurīyah)*" experienced in the "intermediate realm *(barzakh)*", Niʿmat Allāh Valī says that only the *ahl-i Allāh* have the power to go beyond them:

> Such lights have power to prevail over all men except for the people of God *(ahl-i Allāh),* whose own lights envelop and contain these elemental lights, just as sunlight envelops starlight.
>
> *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.214; cf. in SSE4 p.12*

1. *Ḥadīth,* Aḥmad III:128, 242; *cf.* in Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:299.18, 352.27, 372.14, 510.10; 3:103.34, 121.35, *FMIA3* (2:178, *passim*) p.525, *SPK* p.388 (n.20).
2. *E.g.* Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 1:272.17, 279.7, 3:167.8, *FMIA1* (1:50, 54) pp.411, 421, *SPK* pp.72, 247, 388 (n.22).

**ahl al-maʿānī** (A), **ahl-i maʿānī** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of meanings *(maʿānī);* people of internal or spiritual realities; seekers, saints.

Hujwīrī relates a legend concerning the haunting beauty of the voice of the biblical David, at the sweetness of which birds and wild beasts gathered around him, birds fell from the air, water ceased to flow, the people around him needed neither food nor drink for a month, and many died of the rapture they experienced. God, however, wished to test whether the people were hearing the spiritual reality behind the singing or the external sound – physical music being prohibited in orthodox Islam (although the subject remains controversial). He therefore enlisted the aid of *Iblīs,* the devil. Only the *ahl-i maʿnī* heard the inner reality:

> *Iblīs* fashioned a mandolin and a flute and took up a station opposite to the place where David was singing. David's audience became divided into two parties: the blessed and the damned. Those who were destined to damnation lent ear to the music of *Iblīs,* while those who were destined to felicity remained listening to the voice of David. The saints *(ahl-i maʿnī)* were conscious of nothing except David's voice, for they saw God alone; if they heard the devil's music, they regarded it as a temptation proceeding from God, and if they heard David's voice, they recognized it as being a direction from God; wherefore they abandoned all things that are merely subsidiary, and saw both right and wrong as they really are.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXV, KMM p.525; cf. KM pp.402–3*

**ahl al-Maʿná** (A), **ahl-i Maʿnī** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of Meaning *(Maʿná);* people of Reality, people of the Spirit – where *Maʿná* is commonly contrasted with *ṣūrat* (form); hence, those who follow the inner spiritual path, rather than external forms and religious observances. For Rūmī, the *ahl-i Maʿnī* are the saints and mystics:

Go, strive after Reality *(Maʿnī),* O worshipper of form *(ṣūrat),*
for Reality *(Maʿnī)* is the wing on form's *(ṣūrat)* body.
Consort with the followers of Reality *(ahl-i Maʿnī)*
that you may be blessed thereby and give yourself up (to God).
*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:710–11; cf. MJR2 p.40*

**ahl al-naqṣ** (A), **ahl-i naqṣ** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of imperfection *(naqṣ);* worldly people. Since one is influenced by the company one keeps, Ibn al-ʿArabī writes:

May He preserve us from His deception, and not place us among the people of imperfection *(ahl al-naqṣ)!*
*Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 2:531.9, FMIA5 (3:231) p.240, SPK p.269*

**ahl al-naẓar** (A), **ahl-i naẓar** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of insight *(naẓar);* people of vision; those who carefully consider and deliberate; intellectuals; spiritually, mystics, people of spiritual vision or insight; also called *arbāb-i naẓar* and *ṣāḥibān-i naẓar* (lords of insight):

People of insight *(ahl-i naẓar)* can be attracted
by grace and good character.
A wise bird cannot be caught by trap or net.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.7, DIH p.39; cf. DHWC (9:5) p.44*

A lesson from the people of insight *(ahl-i naẓar)*
is a single hint;
Such a hint have I given, and I will not repeat it.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.203, DIH p.330; cf. DHWC (430:3) p.719*

**ahl al-qalb** (A), **ahl-i dil** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of heart *(qalb, dil);* the heart, in Sufi terminology, being that aspect of man's inner being that lies between the *nafs* (lower mind) and the *rūḥ* or *jān* (spirit), above which lie deeper levels of consciousness; hence, mystics, saints; Sufis who are travelling the inner journey; also called *ṣāḥib qalb* and *ṣāḥib-dil* (lords of the heart).

To Ḥāfiẓ, the *ahl-i dil* are those mystics from whom the spiritual "treasure of bliss" is obtained by seekers accepted into their fold:

The key to the treasure of bliss
is acceptance by men of heart *(ahl-i dil);*
Let no one suffer doubt or uncertainty
with respect to this statement.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.108, DIH p.199; cf. in SSE6 p.40*

It is with the "men of heart", says Rūmī, that the lost "goods of wisdom" will be rediscovered:

> The goods of wisdom, which have been lost by your heart,
> are certain to be found with men of heart *(ahl-i dil)*. . . .
> Seek that knowledge from the men of heart *(ahl-i dil):*
> do not seek it from the inanimate,
> for all others beside them are inanimate.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2381, 2383; cf. MJR2 p.344*

But, he warns, have a care what you think when in the company of a saint, for he knows everything:

> Keep watch over your hearts, O fruitless ones,
> in the presence of the majesty of the man of heart *(ṣāḥib-dil).*
> Before the men of body *(ahl-i tan)* respect is shown outwardly,
> for God veils from them what is hidden.
> Before the men of heart *(ahl-i dil),* respect is shown inwardly,
> because their hearts have insight into secret thoughts.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3218–20; cf. MJR2 p.388*

He counsels disciples always to remember the many blessings they have received from the saints, the "kings of religion *(shāhān-i kīsh)*" and the "men of heart"; and if they have forgotten those many blessings, to go and seek their forgiveness, so that the bounty may be restored:

> You have experienced many maladies within yourself,
> and have gained health from these kings of religion:
> How often has your limping been turned into an easy gait,
> how often has your heart been freed from grief and pain!
> O heedless one, tie a string to your foot
> that you may not become unconscious of yourself, O sluggard!
> Your ingratitude and forgetfulness did not recall
> your former drinking of honey.
> Consequently, that way has become closed to you,
> since the hearts of the men of heart *(ahl-i dil)*
> have been made sore by you.
> Go quickly, overtake them, and ask pardon of God:
> weep lamentably like a cloud,
> In order that their rose garden
> may once more open its blossoms to you,
> and that the ripe fruits may burst and reveal themselves.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:307–13; cf. MJR4 pp.20–21*

The "man of heart", he says, makes a brilliant "jewel" out of the hardness and dullness of human "rock":

All the wise have said the same thing:
the wise man is "a mercy to created beings".[1]
If you would buy a pomegranate,
buy it when it is laughing (split open),
so that its laughter (openness)
may give information as to its seeds.
O, blessed is its laughter,
for through its mouth it shows the heart,
like a pearl from the casket of the spirit. . . .
The laughing pomegranate sets the garden laughing:
companionship with holy men makes you one of the holy men.
Though you be rock or marble, you will become a jewel
when you find the man of heart *(ṣāḥib-dil).*

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:717–19, 721–22; cf. MJR2 p.41*

It is the heart *(dil),* continues Rūmī, that leads a person to the man of heart *(ahl-i dil);* and that association with the "men of heart" nourishes the heart with the "food" of spiritual advancement:

Plant the love of the holy ones *(pākān)* in your spirit;
Do not give your heart to anything
except to the love of those whose hearts are glad.
Go not to the neighbourhood of despair: there are hopes.
Go not in the direction of darkness: there are suns.
The heart *(dil)* leads you to the company
of the men of heart *(ahl-i dil);*
The body leads you to the prison of water and earth.
O, nourish your heart *(dil)* with food
from one who is in accord with it!
Go, seek spiritual advancement from one who is advanced.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:723–26; cf. MJR2 p.41*

Mystics are focused entirely upon the Divine, for they see Him everywhere – within and without. This is what Saʿdī means when he says that the *ahl-i dil* have nowhere else to go except to the divine beloved:

For the men of heart *(ahl-i dil),*
there is no other place to go except to you,
for they have no possible means of escape from you.

My mind is not occupied with anyone else:
my thoughts are of you and that is enough.
When ecstasy takes over,
physical sight and hearing no longer function.
*Saʿdī, Ṭayyibāt 137:6–7, KSSS p.274; cf. TOS pp.189–90*

See also: **ṣāḥib al-qalb**.

1. *Qurʾān* 21:107.

**ahl al-riḍāʾ** (A), **ahl-i riżā** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of contentment *(riḍāʾ);* people of satisfaction – *riḍāʾ* implying acquiescence with pleasure; hence, those who take pleasure in acceptance of the divine will, whatever it may be, never praying for anything. They experience perfect contentment because of their complete acceptance, understanding everything that happens to them to be God's will; contrasted with *ahl al-duʿāʾ* (people of supplication), those who pray to God for the fulfilment of their desires. The expression is drawn from the *Qurʾān:*

God (is) well pleased *(raḍiya)* with them, and they with God:
that is the supreme triumph.
*Qurʾān 5:119; cf. AYA, MGK*

Rūmī writes emphatically of the attitude of one who is happy with the divine will:

Wherever the eternal Command takes its course,
living and dying are one to him. . . .
He laughs the minute he sees the divine pleasure *(riżā):*
to him destiny is as sugared sweetmeat.
The servant of God whose disposition is like this –
does the world not move according to his command and behest?
Why then should he make entreaty and cry in prayer,
"O God, avert this destiny"?
For God's sake, his death and the death of his children
are to him like sweetmeats in the mouth.
To that loyal one, the death agony of his children
is like honey cakes to a destitute old man.
*Rūmī, Maśnavī III:1909, 1914–18; cf. MJR4 p.107*

See also: **ahl al-duʿāʾ**, **riḍāʾ** (▸4).

**ahl al-rusūm** (A), **ahl-i rusūm** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of forms *(rusūm);* people of externals; formalists, followers and scholars of external knowledge, such as the various sciences, and especially the *sharīʿah* (Islamic religious law) and its many ramifications; used by Ibn al-ʿArabī in contrast to *ahl Allāh* (people of God).[1]

See also: **ʿālim al-rusūm**.

1. *E.g.* Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:581.4, *FMIA4* (4:272) p.315, *SPK* p.244.

**ahl al-ṣūrah** (A), **ahl-i ṣūrat** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of form *(ṣūrah);* people of external form; followers of external religion. Saʿdī asks:

> How do people of external form *(ahl-i ṣūrat)* find the way
> to the country, where the lords of Truth *(arbāb-i Maʿnī)* dwell?
> *Saʿdī, Bustān 3:234, KSSS p.119; cf. BSS p.197*

**ahl al-ṭāmāt** (A), **ahl-i ṭāmāt** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of self-glorification *(ṭāmāt);* Sufis who display their powers, and speak of their mystical states and experiences in order to gain renown:

> From the *ṣūfī* perspective, the people of self-glorification *(ahl al-ṭāmāt)* are those wayfarers who reveal the truth concerning themselves; who seek to display their powers, and who have become attached to the stations of visionary revelation and miraculous powers.
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.171; cf. in SSE6 p.119*

**ahl al-ṭarīqah** (A), **ahl-i ṭarīqat** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of the path *(ṭarīqah);* mystics. The *ṭarīqah* is the inner path of the Sufis as opposed to the *sharīʿah,* the way of external religious observances. Ḥāfiẓ says that, according to the *ahl-i ṭarīqat,* it is tears of divine longing that truly cleanse the soul, rather than ritual ablutions:

> I performed the major ablution *(ghusl)* in my own tears,
> for the people of the path *(ahl-i ṭarīqat)* assert:
> "First purify yourself, then look upon that Pure One *(Pāk).*"
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.136, DIH p.239; cf. DHWC (307:7) p.533; cf. in SSE3 p.74*

**ahl-i dīdah** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of seeing *(dīdah);* men of vision; mystics:

> Every eye *(dīdah)* that confides in this visionary eye *(dīdah-'i dīdār-dīdah)* will become one of the people of vision *(ahl-i dīdah),* so that invisible matters are seen *(dīdah)* by it.
>
> *Rūmī, in Manāqib al-'Ārifīn 6:19, MASA2 p.767; cf. FKG p.535*

**ahl-i rāz** (P) *Lit.* people *(ahl)* of secrets *(rāz);* men of mysteries; those who know the hidden secrets of the spirit; mystics. Ḥāfiẓ depicts the *ahl-i rāz* as perfect saints whose "message" is that of the divine Music of the "rebec and the lyre":

> The rebec *(rubāb)* and the harp *(chang)* resound
> that you may listen with the inner ear *(gūsh-i hūsh)*
> to the message of the men of mysteries *(ahl-i rāz).*
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.113, DIH p.204*

**Aḥmad** (A/P) *Lit.* most praised, highly praised, most praiseworthy; the most praiseworthy of the prophets; one of the two commonest epithets of the Prophet Muḥammad, the other being Muṣṭafā (the Chosen One). According to the *Qur'ān* the name was foretold by Jesus:

> When Jesus son of Mary said: "O children of Israel! I am the messenger of *Allāh* to you, confirming that which was revealed before me in the *Torah,* and bringing good tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Aḥmad." Yet when he came to them with clear signs, they said: "This is plain sorcery."
>
> *Qur'ān 61:6; cf. MGK*

See also: **faraqlīṭ** (7.2).

**aho rangi** (Mo) *Lit.* radiant light *(aho)* of heaven *(rangi);*[1] a priestly teacher of high standing in the *whare wānanga* (school of sacred learning);[2] in modern times, a professor. See **initiation (Māori)** (7.4).

1. Viktor Krupa, "Metaphors in Maori Vocabulary," *MMVP* p.21.
2. Elsdon Best, *Maori Religion and Mythology, MRM1* p.266.

**aḥrār** (A/P) (sg. *ḥurr*) *Lit.* free, freeborn; free men; hence, the noble; in Sufi terminology, mystics, as in expressions such as *asrār-i aḥrār* (secrets of the

free), and *abrār-i aḥrār* (righteous free men). Aflākī writes that the teachings of the free should not be given to all and sundry:

> One should not tell words of wisdom and the secrets of free men *(asrār-i aḥrār)* to just any person, but rather it is among one's duties to keep them back and conceal them, in accordance with: "Do not bestow wisdom on people unworthy of it, for you will be doing an injustice to wisdom…", up to the end. And if a person is not suitable for these secrets and not worthy of His face, one must not display them and cause the uninitiated to be impudent.
>
> *Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 3:411, MASA1 p.448, FKG p.308*

The saying, "Do not bestow wisdom…" is attributed to the Prophet by Ibn al-ʿArabī,[1] and to Jesus by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī,[2] who appear to be thinking of Jesus' saying, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine."[3]

1. *Ḥadīth,* in Ibn al-ʿArabī, on *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* 2:3, *TAA* p.50.
2. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Kitāb al-ʿIlm,* in *KGCS* p.194.
3. *Matthew* 7:6; *cf. KJV.*

**ahu** (Av) *Lit.* king, prince, sovereign, ruler, master; the acknowledged head or sovereign of a country; appearing briefly in the *Gāthās* of Zarathushtra as the spiritual king, the saviour, where *Ahura Mazdā* (God) asks *Ashā* (Truth):

> Is there no single spiritual sovereign *(ahu)* known,
> nor yet a saviour *(ratu)* rich in righteousness!
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 29:6; cf. DSZ p.60*

In the most well-known Zoroastrian prayer, the *Ahūna Vairya,* the spiritual power of the *ratu* (teacher of righteousness, prophet) is likened to that of a worldly king:

> Just as a temporal sovereign *(ahu)*
> is all-powerful *(vairya)* on earth,
> so, too, is the prophet *(ratu),*
> by virtue of his storehouse of Truth *(Ashā).*
>
> *Yasna 27:13; cf. DSZ p.17*

See also: **Ahūna Vairya** (▸3), **ratu**.

**ailaka** (Pk) A *Digambara* layman *(shrāvaka)* who has attained the higher of the two grades of the eleventh or highest degree *(pratimā)* of renunciation attainable by the Jain laity; of uncertain etymology, possibly from *achelaka* (unclothed, partially unclothed); the final preparatory and probationary step before taking the *mahāvratas* (great vows) and becoming a fully naked *Digambara* monk, also known as a *muni* (sage) or *Nirgrantha* (free of bonds).

Having previously taken the vows of the *kshullaka* (S. small, junior) – the lower of the two grades of the eleventh *pratimā* – at the time of his initiation *(dīkshā)* as an *ailaka,* the would-be monk divests himself of all his garments except a loincloth. He becomes part of a mendicant order, and lives with other mendicants, taking food, while seated, once a day from cupped palms in the house of a layperson. From time to time, he manually plucks out all the hair on his head and face. The rigorous vows of an *ailaka* can only be taken by men.

See also: **kshullaka**, **Nirgrantha**, **vrata** (▸3).

**Ājīvika**, **Ājīvaka** (S) *Lit.* one who follows particular rules regarding livelihood *(jīvaka);* a member of a religious and ascetic spiritual tradition that arose in the Ganges valley, and which believed in the philosophies of fate *(niyati),* reincarnation, and the ideal of liberation and *nirvāṇa;* believed to have been founded by Makkhali Goshāla (*c.*C5th BCE), a contemporary of Mahāvīra and the Buddha. Goshāla likened life to a ball of string that, once thrown, unravels in a predetermined course until it reaches its end. According to his philosophy, no beings in this world, human or otherwise, have control over their destiny. Governed entirely by the cosmic force of *niyati,* by which all events are determined, life progresses in an inexorable and fixed manner, from lower to higher forms, until finally it reaches that of a human being, the culmination of which is to become an *Ājīvika* and gain final release.

The *Ājīvikas* and their philosophy are mentioned in Jain and Buddhist[1] sources, but none of their texts have survived and the history of the relationships between the three traditions is uncertain. Moreover, since knowledge of Goshāla's teachings is only gleaned at secondhand through the writings of his opponents, the accuracy of these reports must be regarded as uncertain. The Buddha considered the *Ājīvika* philosophy to be a denial of human accountability. The *Ājīvaka Sutta,* one of the *suttas* in the *Anguttara Nikāya,* records a dialogue between an *Ājīvika* and Ānanda, a foremost disciple of the Buddha, in which Ānanda maintains that the highest purpose in life is the destruction of passion, hatred and delusion, in order to become free of material existence.

It seems that *Ājīvika* practices were ascetic in nature, including renunciation of all possessions, nakedness, mendicancy, long fasts, including (as in Jainism) to the death *(sallekhanā)* as a fitting end to existence in this world. According to the *Bhagavati Sūtra,* a Jain *Shvetāmbara* text, Goshāla was

Mahāvīra's disciple and travelling companion for six years, the two parting company after a disagreement. Following this tradition, Jain sources generally claim that Goshāla was a disciple of Mahāvīra, and that Goshāla founded the *Ājīvikas* as a breakaway movement. Some modern scholars on the other hand have suggested that the *Ājīvikas* may well have preceded both Buddhism and Jainism. The *Ājīvikas* continued to flourish into the third century BCE and, although they had disappeared from North India by the fourth century CE, they may have survived in the south until the fourteenth century CE. Some thirteenth-century South Indian inscriptions refer to the *Ājīvikas,* although by that time the term may have been used more generally for ascetics from other traditions.

See also: **jina**, **shramaṇa**.

1. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 16, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, PTSD2* p.162; *Majjhima Nikāya* 26 *(Ariyapariyesana Sutta),* 71 *(Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta), PTSM1* pp.170–71, 483.

**akhtar** (P) *Lit.* star. See **najm**.

**akhyār** (A/P) (sg. *khayr*) *Lit.* the good, the virtuous, the excellent; a rank in the hierarchy of the *awliyā'* (friends of God, holy men), in the Sufi classification of those holy men whose role it is to maintain the stability of the world. Details vary to some extent between sources, especially as to their numbers and dwelling place. Hujwīrī speaks of three hundred *akhyār* among the "officers of the divine court",[1] while the *Khulāṣat al-Manāqib* ('Epitome of the Paths') says there are seven.[2] They are said either to wander continuously,[3] or to dwell in Iraq[4] or Egypt:[5]

> In *ṣūfī* terminology, the good *(akhyār)* are men of God who are not expected to commit evil and must do only good *(nīkī);* for their inner being is free of blameworthy attributes.
>
> This name is derived from the verses, "And they, in our view, are indeed among the elect, the good *(akhyār),*"[6] and, "Remember Ishmael and Elisha and Ezekiel, for all are among the hundred and fifty-six men of the Unseen *(mardān-i Ghayb).*"[7]
>
> *Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, in FNI6 pp.30–31; cf. SSE6 p.22*

> It is also said that the good *(akhyār)* are three hundred in number, and are also referred to as the virtuous *(abrār).*
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT2 p.31; cf. in SSE6 p.22*

Characteristically unconcerned with categories and systemization, Rūmī applies all the various terms for holy men to the saints:

> Everything in the world draws something:
> infidelity the infidel, and righteousness him who is guided aright.
> There is both the amber and the magnet:
> whether you are iron or straw you will be attracted.
> The magnet carries you off if you are iron:
> and if you are straw, you will be in contact with the amber.
> When any one is not associated with the good *(akhyār),*
> he inevitably becomes a neighbour to the wicked.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1633–36; cf. MJR4 pp.362–63*

Hujwīrī, despite the place he accords the *akhyār* in his categorization of holy men, also quotes an unknown poet who uses the term in a more general sense:

> Not to advance on the paths of the virtuous *(akhyār)* is polytheism.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb I, KMM p.21, KM p.18*

See also: **abdāl**, **abrār**.

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIV, *KMM* p.269, *KM* p.214.
2. *Khulāṣat al-Manāqib,* in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.57; *cf.* in *SSE6* p.23.
3. Tahānawī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.57, in *SSE6* pp.22–23.
4. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Maghribī, in *KTS* p.239, in *FNI6* p.32, in *SSE6* p.23.
5. *Khulāṣat al-Manāqib,* in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.57; *cf.* in *SSE6* p.23.
6. *Qur'ān* 38:47.
7. *Cf. Qur'ān* 38:48.

**Albigenses**, **Albigensians** A Cathar or gnostic Christian movement that flourished in southern France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; one of many that spread throughout much of medieval Europe during the eleventh to fifteenth centuries. The designation is somewhat inaccurate, the movement being centred around Toulouse, Beziers, and the Languedoc area of France, rather than Albi, which is further north. Cathar beliefs are commonly said to have travelled along the trade routes from Eastern Europe, although it is probable that the Albigensians also had significant ties with the many mystical movements – including Jewish Kabbalism and Muslim Sufism – that flourished in Spain during its period of Moorish influence and rule.

Due to the destruction of practically all Albigensian literature during the later persecutions, their teachings and beliefs are known almost entirely by inference from records left by their opponents. Since the Cathars were possibly of Manichaean origin, they probably held many of the beliefs of their forebears, including reincarnation. It is known that the Albigensians opposed the corruption of the clergy of the time, and were generally known for their high ethical and moral standards, an educational system that was advanced for its time, and the social equality of men and women. Their theological and ascetic leaders were known as *les bons hommes* or *les bons chrétiens.*

The first appearance of the movement seems to have been at Limousin between 1012 and 1020. Protected at first by William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, followed soon after by many of the southern nobility, the movement rapidly gained ground. Fearing the gradual erosion of orthodoxy, in 1119, the Council of Toulouse ineffectually ordered the secular powers to assist the ecclesiastical authorities to quell the 'heresy'. The movement however remained a vibrant part of the Provençal culture for a hundred years until the appointment of Innocent III as pope. Peaceful means having failed, in 1209, the pope ordered the Cistercians to urge a crusade against the Albigensians, pitting the French nobility of the north against their counterparts in the south. The resulting war, with the massacre of both Albigensians and catholics, effectively destroyed the advanced culture of Provence and the independence of the southern nobility. The war ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1229. Despite the violence, the Albigensian movement was not finally eliminated until the fourteenth century, under the auspices of the early Inquisition.

In Italy and southern Germany, the Waldensians, the Jochamists, and the other vestiges of the Cathars lingered on until the fifteenth century.[1]

See also: **Cathari**, **reincarnation and transmigration** (**in Christianity**) (6.3).

1. Historical material drawn from "Albigenses," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2001).

**alif** (A/P) *Lit.* the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, written as a single vertical stroke, like the number one, and used to signify *Allāh,* the one God and divine unity; hence, the perfect saint or perfect man *(al-insān al-kāmil)* is described as *alif*-like, of straight and noble stature. As Bābā Ṭāhir describes himself:

> The sea crammed into a bowl am I;
> The dot ticked over a stroke am I.
> An *alif*-like figure *(alif qad)* comes every millennium;
> That one that comes in a thousand am I.
>
> *Bābā Ṭāhir Hamadānī, in SKQ p.119, in SSE1 p.13*

Rūmī also compares the saint to an *alif*. In one of many passages in praise of the saint, he writes that while his outer aspect is in this world, his inner spirit soars through the heavens and converses with God, listening to the "mysteries of *Kun!* (Be!)", a term for the Creative Word:

One form *(naqsh)* of him
is seated in the sublunary world (this world),
while his other form *(naqsh)* is in heaven, like the moon.
This mouth of his speaks on subtle points to those beside him:
the other is in intimate discourse with God.
His outer ear listens to these words:
his spiritual ear withdraws into the mysteries of *Kun!* (Be!).
His outer eye sees human forms and features:
his inner eye is dazzled in the glory of "the eye did not stray".[1]
His outer feet stand evenly in the row in the mosque:
his spiritual feet circumambulate above the sky.
Consider every one of his members in like fashion:
this part is within time, that part is beyond time.
This which is in time endures till death:
the other is the associate of everlastingness
and the peer of eternity.

One of his names is 'owner of the two worlds';
One description of him is *'imām* of the two *qiblahs'*.
Religious seclusion and the forty days' fast *(chillah)*
are no longer incumbent on him:
No cloud is overclouding him any more.
His solitary cell (heart) is resplendent as the sun's orb:
how should alien night throw a veil over it?
Sickness and abstinence are gone, the crisis is past:
his infidelity has become faith, and disbelief is no more.

Like the *alif,* he has taken the foremost place
because of his uprightness:
He retains no attributes of his own.
He has become separated from the garment of his own nature:
His spirit has gone, naked,
to Him who gave it increase of spirituality.
Since it went naked into the presence of the incomparable King,
the King made for it a raiment of holy qualities.
It put on a robe of the King's attributes:
it flew up from the pit to the palace of majesty.

Such is the case: when dregs become pure,
they rise from the bottom of the bowl to the top.
*Rūmī, Maśnavī V:3601–16; cf. MJR6 pp.215–16*

The upright stature of man has also been compared to the *alif.* After describing the marvellous way in which God has constructed the physical aspects of the human body, Saʿdī goes on to describe man's stature as being superior to the beasts and fit for devotion to God. But more important than that, he says, is an upright life, for even the "unbeliever" walks upright:

In the head – vision, and thought, and judgment, and discretion:
The limb of the body for the dear heart,
and the heart for dear wisdom.

The wild beasts, with countenance downcast, are contemptible;
You, *alif*-like, stand upright on your legs –
While their heads hang down to take their food,
you, with dignity, bring your food to the head.

It becomes you not, with so much chieftainship,
to lower your head, save in devotion to God.
Behold! By His own beauty, God gave you knowledge:
He made you not, like the animals, head in the grass.

But with this heart-enchanting form
be not fascinated: walk well in life.
A straight path *(rah-i rāst)* is necessary,
not an erect stature *(bālā-yi rāst):*
The unbeliever is also like us, in outward form.
He, who gave you eye and mouth, and ear:
if you are wise – strive not in opposition to Him.
*Saʿdī, Bustān 8:45–52, KSSS p.157; cf. BSS pp.347–48*

See also: **alif** (2.2).

1. *Qur'ān* 53:17.

ʿ**ālim** (A/P) (pl. *ʿulamā',* P. *ʿālimān*) *Lit.* knower; related to *ʿilm* (knowledge, learning, lore); hence, a scholar, a savant, a person of knowledge, a learned person, specifically of Islamic religious studies; a doctor of religion, a doctor of religious law, a divine, a theologian; hence also, an *imām* in an important

mosque, a *qāżī* (a judge in Islamic religious law), an authority on religious matters; commonly contrasted in Sufism with *ʿārif* (knower, gnostic), one who has direct mystical experience of the Divine; also, one of the names of *Allāh,* as *al-ʿAlīm* (the All-Knowing, the Omniscient).

The meaning can depend upon the context, however, since knowledge can be either worldly or divine, intellectual or mystical. The well-known Arabic Sufi, Junayd, for example, was known as *Ṭāʾūs al-ʿUlamāʾ* ('Peacock of the Knowers').[1] Likewise, the expressions *ʿālim al-rabbānī* (knower of divine things, knower of the Lord), *ʿālim al-ilāhī* (divine knower), and *ʿulamāʾ al-ākhirah* (knowers of the hereafter) refer to mystics or to those wise in spiritual matters, while *ʿālim al-rusūm* (knower of form) is a scholar of external religious concerns.

Also, according to a Sufi interpretation of the ambiguous *ḥadīth* (traditional saying of the Prophet), "the knowers *(al-ʿulamāʾ)* are the heirs of the prophets *(al-anbiyāʾ),*" the real *ʿulamāʾ* are the Sufis and mystics rather than the scholars. But the *ḥadīth* can be interpreted either way:

> If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge *(ʿilm), Allāh* will cause him to travel on one of the roads of paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge *(ʿilm),* the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man *(ʿālim).* The superiority of the learned man *(ʿālim)* over the devout is like that of the moon on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The *ʿulamāʾ* are the heirs of the prophets, and the prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge *(ʿilm),* and he who takes it takes an abundant portion.
>
> *Ḥadīth Sunan Abū Dāwūd 25:3634, HSD*

In discussions of this *ḥadīth,* al-Sarrāj includes both scholars and Sufis among the *ʿulamāʾ:*

> Those endowed with knowledge of unassailable credibility are the heirs of the prophets; it is they who are devoted to the Book of God Most High, who strive to follow God's Messenger, God's blessings and peace upon him, and who emulate the companions and Followers in travelling the road of God Most High's devout friends and upright servants.… They are of three categories: scholars of the *ḥadīth (aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth),* jurists *(fuqahāʾ),* and *ṣūfīs.* These are the three groups endowed with knowledge of unassailable credibility who are the heirs of the prophets.
>
> *Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf 1, KLTA pp.2–3, 5, in KGCS pp.66–67*

Other Sufis express a spread of opinion.[2] Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī regards the *ʿulamāʾ*

> The friends of God *(awliyāʾ)* are the inner heirs of the prophets, while scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* are their outer heirs. Certain perfect and perfecting friends of God are both inner and outer heirs.
>
> *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasāʾil, RNV3 pp.137–38, in SSE6 p.54*

According to al-Jīlānī, the *ʿulamāʾ* and true heirs are "those who have true gnosis and knowledge *(al-ʿārifūn al-ʿālimūn)* of God Almighty".[3] He also observes:

> The *ʿulamāʾ* (gnostics), the *awliyāʾ* (saints) and the *abdāl* (deputies) are the heirs of the prophets *(al-anbiyāʾ).* The prophets are the brokers and these others are their advertising agents. . . .
>
> The *ʿulamāʾ* (gnostics) are God's true vicegerents on earth. They are His deputies *(nuwwāb)* and envoys *(rusul).* They are the heirs of the prophets *(al-anbiyāʾ)* and the messenger *(al-mursalūn).* Not you, O deluded fools, O you who are preoccupied with tongue-wagging and legalistic knowledge *(fiqh)* of the outer *(al-ẓāhir),* but are a bag full of ignorance of the inner *(al-bāṭin).*
>
> *Al-Jīlānī, al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī 12, 15, FRQJ pp.61, 73;*
> *cf. EDG1 pp.80, 100, SRCD pp.83, 103–4*

Shams-i Tabrīz is equally unequivocal when he says of his disciple Rūmī:

> The key to paradise is Mawlānā. Go look at Mawlānā if you wish to know the meaning of "*Al-ʿulamāʾ* are the heirs of the prophets."
>
> *Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 3:209, MASA1 p.295; cf. FKG (3:208) p.204*

In common Muslim parlance, however, the *ʿulamāʾ* are the learned men who are empowered to decide on issues of *fiqh* (jurisprudence, religious law) and *sharīʿah* (religious observances and conduct). The *ʿulamāʾ* are therefore highly influential in Muslim society, and their integrity is a matter of some significance. Quoting Abū Bakr Warrāq, and incidentally demonstrating how human nature is much the same in all ages, Hujwīrī compares *ʿulamāʾ,* princes *(umarāʾ),* and dervishes or fakirs *(fuqarāʾ):*

> It is related that Abū Bakr Warrāq said: "There are three classes of men – religious leaders or scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* and princes *(umarāʾ)* and dervishes (*fuqarāʾ,* fakirs). When the religious leaders *(ʿulamāʾ)* are corrupt, piety and religion are defiled; when the princes *(umarāʾ)* are

> corrupt, men's livelihood is spoiled; and when the dervishes *(fuqarā')* are corrupt, men's morals are depraved."
>
> The corruption of the religious leaders *('ulamā')* consists of covetousness, that of princes *(umarā')* of injustice, and that of the dervishes *(fuqarā')* of hypocrisy. Princes *(umarā')* do not become corrupt until they turn their backs on religious leaders *('ulamā'),* and religious leaders *('ulamā')* do not become corrupt until they associate with princes *(umarā'),* and dervishes *(fuqarā')* do not become corrupt until they seek ostentation; because the injustice of princes *(umarā')* is due to want of knowledge, and the covetousness of the religious leaders *('ulamā')* is due to want of piety, and the hypocrisy of the dervishes *(fuqarā')* is due to want of trust in God.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XI:43, KMM pp.179–80; cf. KM pp.142–43*

In a place and age where rulers gained and maintained their positions largely by the sword, the life of the common man was forever dominated by the character of the current ruler. In his audacious work, *Counsel for Kings,* al-Ghazālī advises rulers to be aware of the "danger of authority", and always to consult with the *'ulamā',* though discriminating between the ambitious and the truly pious:

> . . . Such, then, is the danger of authority. Knowledge of this subject takes long to acquire; but the ruler should know that he will find safety in always being with devout *'ulamā'* who will instruct him in the way of justice, and keep the danger of his role fresh in his mind.
>
> The ruler should always desire to meet devout *'ulamā'* and to ask them for advice; but he should beware of meeting *'ulamā'* with worldly ambitions who might inveigle, flatter and seek to please him in order to gain control over his earthly body by stealth and deceit. The devout *'ālim* is not one who has covetous designs on the treasury, but one who gives his knowledge in just measure. . . .
>
> From every *'ālim* whom he meets, he should seek counsel; and every *'ālim* who meets kings should give this sort of advice, without suppressing the word of truth, and without flattering their conceit so as to share in their tyranny.
>
> *Al-Ghazālī, Counsel for Kings 1, TMNM; cf. GCK pp.19, 22–23*

Corruption among the power hungry and seekers of high social position is common to all ages, and the observations of Hujwīrī (*d.c.* 1077) and al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) are by no means unique. Ibn al-'Arabī (1165–1240) also writes:

> When the winds of caprice dominate souls, and religious leaders *('ulamā')* seek high positions with kings, they leave the straight path

> and incline toward far-fetched interpretations. Thus they are able to align themselves to the personal desires of the kings according to the whims of their souls, and the kings can then validate themselves by a command based on the *sharīʿah.* It may happen that the jurist *(faqīh)* does not himself believe the interpretation, but he gives pronouncements *(fatwá)* in accordance with it. We have seen a number of judges and jurists who were like this.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:69.30, FMIA5 (4:318) p.101; cf. SPK p.202*

Contrasting the intellect of the *ʿulamāʾ* with the divine love of the dervish, a disciple of Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ writes of his master in his journal, dated Monday, the 27th of *Ṣafar,* 715 AH (June 2nd 1315):

> He began to speak about love and reason. "They are mutually exclusive," he declared. "The *ʿulamāʾ* are the partisans of reason, dervishes the partisans of love. The human intellect of the *ʿulamāʾ* dominates their sense of divine love, while attention to divine love among dervishes exceeds their use of the intellect. Prophets are equally strong in love and reason."
>
> *Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, Morals for the Heart 4:14, FFNA pp.226–27, MHN p.233*

In Sufi literature, anecdotes commonly portray the *ʿulamāʾ* in contention with Sufis, against whom the *ʿulamāʾ* generally come off worse. In a story related in the same journal, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī goes to visit a *qāżī* (a judge in Islamic religious law). He is told by a servant that the *qāżī* is praying, at which the *shaykh* smiles and asks, before leaving, "Does the *qāżī* know how to offer prayer?" The comment is reported to the *qāżī,* who goes to visit the *shaykh* the next day. He first apologizes for not having received the *shaykh,* and then asks:

> "Why did you ask whether or not I knew how to perform the canonical prayer? I have written several books on prayer and its requirements."
>
> The *shaykh* replied: "Alas, the prayer of scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* is one thing, the prayer of God's beggars *(fuqarāʾ)* is another thing."
>
> The *qāżī* asked: "Do they perform a different kind of bowing and a different kind of prostration, or do they read the *Qurʾān* a different way?"
>
> The *shaykh* replied: "In their prayer, the scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* face the *Kaʿbah,* and then pray. If they cannot see the *Kaʿbah,* they pray in the direction of the *Kaʿbah,* and if they are in a place where even the direction of the *Kaʿbah* is not known, they select the most likely direction that would orient them to the *Kaʿbah.* The prayer orientation *(qiblah)* of the scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* lies within these three possibilities,

whereas the beggars of God never offer prayer unless they see the throne of God."

The *qāżī,* though this explanation annoyed him, said nothing. He returned from there to his own home. That night the *qāżī* had a dream in which he saw Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Tabrīzī – may God sanctify his lofty soul – with his prayer carpet spread before the divine throne, saying his prayers. The next day, they both met in a gathering. Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn said: "O So-and-so, the work of scholars *(ʿulamāʾ)* and their stage of vocational achievement is known. Their concern and non-concern is limited to teaching, and they can only become a teacher or a *qāżī* or the *ṣadr-i jahān* (highest ranking legal and religious officer). Their stage of vocational achievement cannot be higher than this. But for the saints there are higher stages. The initial stage for saints is that which was manifest to the *qāżī* last night."

On hearing this, Qāżī Kamāl al-Dīn arose, offered his full apology to the *shaykh* and, placing his son Burhān al-Dīn at the feet of the *shaykh,* asked that he might become the *shaykh*'s disciple, and obtain the cap of discipleship from him.

*Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, Morals for the Heart 5:12, FFNA pp.402–3; cf. MHN p.345*

Rūmī puts the matter succinctly. Even the "sleep of the wise *(ʿālim)*" is better than the exertion of external worship, so long as their knowledge or wisdom is of a mystical nature:

The sleep of the wise *(ʿālim)* is better than worship,
if their wisdom *(ʿilm)* is such as brings awakening.
The quiet of the swimmer in swimming is better
than the exertion with hands and feet of one who cannot swim.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:3878–79; cf. MJR6 pp.471–72*

See also: **ʿālim al-rusūm**, **ʿārif**.

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIV:4, *KMM* p.235, *KM* pp.188–89.
2. See also Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, in *HSL2* p.332.
3. Al-Jīlānī, *al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī* 29, *FRQJ* p.126, *EDG1* pp.193–94.

**ʿālim al-rusūm** (A), **ʿālim-i rusūm** (P) (pl. A. *ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm,* P. *ʿulamā-yi rusūm*) *Lit.* knower *(ʿālim)* of forms *(rusūm),* knower of externals; a scholar of external knowledge, such as the various sciences, and especially the *sharīʿah* (external observances of Islam) and its many ramifications; an exoteric scholar; also called *ʿulamāʾ al-sharīʿah* (scholars of the *sharīʿah*) and *ahl al-rusūm* (people of forms, people of externals);[1] terms used by Ibn

al-ʿArabī, who generally uses them pejoratively, though not always,[2] since outer knowledge has a validity within its own sphere of reference. Usually, he contrasts the *ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm* with the *ahl Allāh* (people of *Allāh,* folk of *Allāh*) or the *ʿārifūn* (mystics, gnostics). Speaking of mystic experience using the Sufi terms *dhawq* (tasting) and *shurb* (drinking), he writes:

> Most of the exoteric scholars *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm)* lack the knowledge of this through tasting *(dhawq)* and drinking *(shurb).* So they deny such things in the mystics *(ʿārifūn),* out of envy on their part. If it were impossible to ascribe such things to God, He would not have ascribed them to Himself, nor would His messengers have ascribed them. But the envy of these people prevents them from seeing that they are rejecting the Book of God and forbidding God's mercy from reaching some of His servants. Most of the common people follow the jurists in this denial, in imitation of them. No! On the contrary – praise belongs to God! – the lesser part of the common people.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 1:272.17, FMIA1 (1:50) p.411; cf. SPK p.72*

And:

> When God created the creatures, He created man in various stages *(ṭawr).* Among us are the knower and the ignorant, the just and the stubborn, the overpowering and the overpowered, the ruler and the ruled, the dominating and the dominated, the leader and the follower, the commander and the commanded, the king and the subjects, and the envier and the envied. God created no one more onerous and troublesome for the folk of *Allāh (ahl Allāh)* than the exoteric scholars *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm).* Yet the folk of *Allāh* are those who have been singled out for His service. They are the mystics *(ʿārifūn)* by way of divine bestowal, those whom He has given His mysteries among His creatures, letting them understand the meaning of His Book and the allusions of His address. In relation to the folk of *Allāh,* the exoteric scholars *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm)* are like the Pharaohs in relation to God's messengers. . . .
>
> But the exoteric scholars *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm)* have preferred this world to the next, and the side of creation to the side of the Real. They have become accustomed to taking knowledge from books and from the mouths of men of their own kind. They think they are of the folk of *Allāh* because of that which they know and by which they surpass the common people. All of this has veiled them from knowing that God has servants whom He has undertaken to teach, in their inmost mystery, what He has sent down in His books and upon the tongues of His messengers. This is sound knowledge from the Knower – Him

> who teaches and concerning whose knowledge no man of faith has any doubt, nor any man without faith. . . .
>
> One of the characteristics of the exoteric scholar *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm)* in defending himself is that he is ignorant of him who says, "My Lord has given me to understand." He considers himself superior to the one who says this and to the true possessor of knowledge. But he who is of the folk of *Allāh* says, "God has cast into my inmost consciousness what He meant by this ruling in this verse." Or he says, "I saw the Messenger of God in an incident (revelation), and he gave me news of the soundness of this report, which has been related for him and what it signifies for him."
>
> Concerning this station and its soundness, Abū Yazīd addressed the exoteric scholars *(ʿulamāʾ al-rusūm)* with his words, "You take your dead knowledge from the dead, but we take our knowledge from the Alive who does not die!"
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 1:279.7,*
> *FMIA1 (1:54) pp.421–23, SPK pp.246, 248–49*

See also: **ahl Allāh**, **rusūm** (▸3).

1. *E.g.* Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:581.4, *FMIA4* (4:272) p.315, *SPK* p.244.
2. *E.g.* Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 3:167.3, *FMIA5* (4:342) p.247, *SPK* p.388 (n.22).

**amarā-vikkhepika** (Pa) *Lit.* eel *(amarā)* wriggler *(vikkhepika);* an equivocator, a sophist, a sceptic; evoking the imagery of a slippery eel that cannot easily be caught or even held in the hand; an epithet of someone who refuses to be pinned down on any moral or philosophical issue on the basis that there is no means of verifying what is true and what is not; applied to a contemporary of the Buddha, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta, one of six *samaṇa* teachers *(i.e.* holy men, monks, contemplatives, ascetics, *etc.)* mentioned in Buddhist texts,[1] who is described by an unimpressed seeker, King Ajātasattu: "Of all these *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇs,* Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta is the most stupid and confused."[2] Two of Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta's followers, Mahā Moggallāna and Sāriputta, ultimately left his tutelage, and became among the foremost disciples of the Buddha, often mentioned in Buddhist texts. It is said that they were accompanied by five hundred other followers of Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta.

The *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* lists sixty-two kinds of wrong view *(micchā-diṭṭhi),* of which four are said to characterize an eel-wriggler, and which arise from a lack of clear understanding of the true nature of things and what should be the primary objective in life:

> There are, monks, some *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇs* who are eel-wrigglers *(amarā-vikkhepikā).* When asked about this or that matter, they resort to evasive statements, and they wriggle like eels *(amarā-vikkhepa)* on four grounds. What are they? There is an *samaṇa* or *brāhmaṇ* who . . . thinks: "I do not in truth know whether this is good or whether it is bad. Not knowing which is right, I might declare: 'That is good,' or 'That is bad,' and that might be a lie, which would distress me. And if I were distressed, that would be a hindrance to me." Thus, fearing to lie, abhorring to lie, he does not declare a thing to be good or bad; but when asked about this or that matter, he resorts to evasive statements and wriggles like an eel *(amarā-vikkhepa):* "I don't say this, I don't say that. I don't say it is otherwise. I don't say it is not. I don't not say it is not." This is the first case.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 1, Brahmajāla Sutta, PTSD1 pp.24–25; cf. TBLD p.80*

The second reason the eel-wriggler gives for his stance is that were he to assert a particular viewpoint, he knows that this would only be the result of his personal likes and dislikes, his attractions or aversions, his personal prejudices. He knows that were he to make a clear statement about something, he could be wrong. Since this uncertainty would result in mental unrest, he reasons that it is better to have no particular opinion of the matter and thereby avoid the distress of mental uncertainty. These first two categories demonstrate that although the eel-wriggler wishes to avoid making categorical statements, he does not lack a moral conscience. He does not wish to express an opinion that could easily be wrong.

The third reason the eel-wriggler gives for his perspective is that it is best to take no definitive view of a thing in case one is challenged by

> "wise, skilful, practised debaters, like archers who can split hairs, who go around destroying others' views with their wisdom, and they might cross-examine me, demanding my reasons and arguing. And I might not be able to reply. Not being able to reply would distress me, and, if, I were distressed, that would be a hindrance to me." Thus, fearing debate, abhorring debate, he resorts to evasive statements.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 1, Brahmajāla Sutta, PTSD1 p.26, TBLD pp.80–81*

The fourth kind of wrong view, says the *Brahmajāla Sutta,* that is adopted by the eel-wriggler, arises from "his dullness and stupidity", such that

> when he is questioned he resorts to evasive statements and wriggles like an eel *(amarā-vikkhepa):* "If you ask me whether there is another world – if I thought so, I would say there is another world. But I don't say so. And I don't say otherwise. And I don't say it is not, and I don't

> not say it is not." "Is there no other world?" . . . "Is there both another world and no other world?" . . . "Is there neither another world nor no other world?" . . . "Are there spontaneously born beings?" . . . "Are there not . . .? Both . . .? Neither . . .?" . . . "Does the *tathāgata* exist after death? Does he not exist after death? Does he both exist and not exist after death? Does he neither exist nor not exist after death?" . . . "If I thought so, I would say so, . . . I don't say it is not."
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 1, Brahmajāla Sutta, PTSD1 p.27, TBLD p.81*

These kind of passages, characteristic of a number of Buddhist texts, exhibit a lack of any in-depth understanding of the actual views of the eel-wrigglers or their mode of thinking, and seem more in the nature of polemic. It is possible, at least in some instances, that the eel-wrigglers were simply acknowledging essential human ignorance by adopting a definitively sceptical stance, questioning whether in all honesty a person could be truly sure about anything, especially of matters concerning higher realities. Indeed, this something that was taught by the Buddha himself.

See also: **shramaṇa**.

1. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 2, *Sāmañ̃aphala Sutta, PTSD1* pp.52–59, *DBRD* pp.69–75.
2. *Dīgha Nikāya* 2, *Sāmañ̃aphala Sutta, PTSD1* p.59.

**ambassador** An authorized messenger or representative, sometimes invested with the power and authority of the one who sends him; mystically, one of the many terms used for a master or saviour as mediator between man and God; used especially in early Christian and Manichaean times. The epithet is used in the *Acts of Thomas* where Judas Thomas praises Jesus as:

> Jesus Christ, son of compassion and perfect saviour, . . .
> the undaunted Power that has overthrown the Enemy, . . .
> the ambassador that was sent from the Height.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 10; cf. ANT p.369*

And similarly:

> You were the ambassador,
> and were sent from the supernal heights,
> because you are able to do the living and perfect will of your Sender.
>
> *Acts of Thomas (Syriac); cf. AAA p.154*

The sixteenth-century Teresa of Ávila likewise describes Jesus as the ambassador:

> Remember that the good Jesus is our ambassador here, and that his desire has been to mediate between us and his Father at no small cost to himself.
>
> *Teresa of Ávila, Way of Perfection 32, CWTA2 p.135*

Manichaean mythology of the third century onwards speaks of the Third Messenger or Third Ambassador, the saviour who is sent to this world to rescue the particles of light (souls) from the powers of darkness.

In first-century Alexandria, the Greek-speaking Jew, Philo Judaeus, describes the Creative Word *(Logos)* as the divine ambassador and mediator:

> And on His chief messenger and most ancient *Logos,* the Father of all has bestowed a special gift, to stand on the brink separating creature from Creator. And this same *Logos* both pleads with the Immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortals, and acts as the King's ambassador to the subject ones.
>
> And he glories in this gift, exulting majestically in it, describing it in these words, "I stood between the Lord and you (to show you the Word of the Lord),"[1] being neither uncreated as God nor yet created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both: to the parent, pledging that the creature will never fly away and altogether rebel, choosing disorder above order; and to the creature, to make confident his hope that the merciful God will not forget the work of His own hands.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Heir of Divine Things 42;*
> *cf. PCW4 pp.384–87, TGH1 p.250, WPJ2 p.134*

See also: **messenger**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 5:5, *KJV.*

**amīn** (A/P) *Lit.* faithful, reliable, trustworthy, loyal, upright, honest; hence, the trusted one, the faithful one, the loyal one; thus, a trustee, an official, an agent; also, an epithet *(al-Amīn)* given to Prophet Muḥammad as a young man on account of his trustworthiness, his fair dealing and his honourable bearing, which inspired confidence in his associates; in Sufism, a saint or perfect man.

Although Muḥammad is regarded as the last prophet, the *Qur'ān* speaks of previous prophets or messengers *(rusul)* as his spiritual equals. Such

messengers are trustworthy, because the divine source of their message is trustworthy. Thus, the prophet Hūd,[1] possibly the biblical Ehud,[2] who was sent to the tribe of *ʿĀd,* says:

> O my people! There is no foolishness in me,
> but I am a messenger *(rasūl)* from the Lord of the worlds.
> I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission:
> I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser *(amīn nāṣiḥ).*
> *Qur'ān 7:67–68; cf. AYA, MGK*

Likewise, Nūḥ (Noah) says to the people of his time and place:

> I am to you a trustworthy messenger *(amīn rasūl).*
> *Qur'ān 26:107; cf. AYA*

Similarly, *Jabra'īl* (Gabriel), who brought revelation to the Prophet, is also known by the epithet *al-Rūḥ al-Amīn* (the Trustworthy Spirit).[3]

Rūmī says that one who has surrendered his self to God becomes an *amīn* (trustee). He gives the example of a father who strikes his son. Because the father is personally involved in the action, he has to bear the consequences of the blow. But if a teacher, acting purely in the capacity of a trustee, strikes a pupil, then because this is a part of the teacher's duty, the act (according to the "books of jurisprudence", says Rūmī) carries no consequences. Likewise, God becomes responsible for everything done by the devotee who has surrendered his self to Him, and acts purely as a trustee:

> Behead your selfhood, O warrior,
> become a selfless naughted one like the dervish.
> When you have become selfless, everything you do
> is "You did not throw when you threw,"[4] and you are safe.
> Then the responsibility lies with God, not the trustee *(amīn):*
> it is set forth plainly in books of jurisprudence.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:1522–24; cf. MJR6 p.343*

See also: **amānah** (5.1).

1. *Qur'ān* 7:65, 11:50–60, 89, 26:123–24, 46:21.
2. *Judges* 3:15–28, 4:1.
3. *Qur'ān* 26:193.
4. *Qur'ān* 8:17.

**amīr** (A/P) (pl. *umarā'*) *Lit.* commander, chieftain, nobleman, prince, ruler; anglicized as 'emir'; an epithet of various high offices in a Muslim state, as in *amīr al-ḥajj* (commander of the pilgrimage), the officer in charge of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca; *amīr al-baḥr* (commander of the sea), admiral of the fleet; as well as *amīr al-umarā'* (ruler of rulers) and *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), both being epithets of the *khalīfah* (caliph); sometimes, in Sufism, the one who has command over his lower self and has submitted himself to God. As Hujwīrī puts it:

> For a man to prefer God's choice is itself the result of God's choice, for unless God has caused him to have no choice, he would never let his own choice go. When Abū Yazīd was asked, "Who is an *amīr?*" he replied, "He to whom no choice is left, and to whom God's choice has become the only choice."
>
> It is related that Junayd, having caught fever, implored God to give him health. A voice spoke in his heart: "Who are you to plead in My kingdom and make a choice? I can manage My kingdom better than you. Choose My choice instead of coming forward with yours."
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KMM p.503; cf. KM p.388*

When this state of submission is achieved, the soul attains union with God, and His rulership:

> Whenever the visionary, having traversed the stages of devotion, becomes the object of vision and a master, God makes him *amīr* in His dominion, ruling by the rule of God. Then, when he commands something; it is decreed.[1]
>
> *Rūzbihān, Mashrab al-Arwāḥ 9:20, MARB p.176, in SSE5 p.56*

But to begin with, the Sufi must overcome his lower nature:

> From the *ṣūfī* perspective, emirship *(amīrī)* represents the prevailing of the wayfarer's will over the army of lust and anger, and his chastisement of error.
>
> *Muḥammad al-Dārābī, Laṭīfah-'i Ghaybī 2, LGMD p.138; cf. in SSE5 p.56*

Little by little, however, he will make his way out of the prison of the body:

> Take up a pick: dig your way out of the prison.
> Once you have broken out, you will be king and *amīr.*
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 636:6631, KSD2 p.58, in SSE5 p.55*

1. *Cf. Qur'ān* 2:117.

**anāgāmin** (S), **anāgāmī** (S/Pa), **phyir mi 'ong ba** (T), **bùhái** (C), **fugen** (J) *Lit.* without, non *(an)*-arrival *(āgamana);* not subject to returning, non *(an)*-returner *(āgāmin),* never *(mi 'ong ba)* returner *(phyir);* without coming, without arriving; one who is no longer liable to rebirth in this world, but who will be reborn in or remain in the heavenly regions for some time before attaining liberation or *arhat*-ship; a Buddhist term for a noble disciple (S. *ārya-pudgala,* Pa. *ariya-puggala*) who has reached the third of the four successive stages of spiritual liberation; one who has overcome the five lower fetters and has reached the stage prior to attaining the status of an *arahanta* (Pa) or fully enlightened and liberated being, free of all bondage.

According to Buddhist philosophy, ten fetters (Pa. *saṃyojana*) hold beings to the wheel of birth and death. The first five create bondage to the material world; the remaining five result in bondage to the finer or higher worlds. The five lower fetters are: belief in the illusion of a personal self *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi),* doubt concerning the Buddha and his doctrines *(vicikicchā),* clinging to the practice of rituals *(sīlabbata-parāmāsa),* sensual craving *(kāmarāga),* and ill will or resentment *(vyāpāda).*

The *anāgāmī* has still to overcome the five higher fetters of craving for pleasures of the subtle material world *(rūparāga),* craving for immaterial pleasures in the higher worlds *(arūparāga),* conceit *(māna),* restlessness *(uddhacca),* and ignorance *(avijjā).* Having overcome the higher fetters, he becomes an *arahanta,* and attains *nibbāna.* For this reason, although he is no longer liable to rebirth in this world – the world of desire *(kāmaloka)* – he will still be reborn in the world of forms *(rūpaloka)* or in the world of formlessness *(arūpaloka),* also called the pure abodes *(suddhāvāsa),* from where he will advance and become an *arahanta.*

One who has just begun the search for spiritual realization, and has overcome the first three fetters is known as a *sotāpanna* ('stream-enterer'). One who has overcome the first five fetters in their gross form, but is still liable to one more birth before attaining liberation is a *sakadāgāmī* ('once-returner').

Numerous Buddhist texts in both Sanskrit and Pali, in the *suttas* as well as the associated commentarial literature *(Abhidhamma),* list five categories of *anāgāmī,* differentiated by the point at which the *anāgāmī* attains *parinibbāna.*[1]

Although there are variations in the details of these categories, it is generally said that when an *anāgāmī* dies in this world *(kāma-dhātu),* according to the strength of the remaining five fetters, he is reborn either in the world of form *(rūpa-dhātu),* a heavenly world of subtle matter, or in the more subtle, formless world *(arūpa-dhātu).* From there, after overcoming his desire for existence in these heavenly realms, after a longer or shorter time and with greater or lesser effort, he attains *nibbāna.* In some instances, he passes successively from a lower heaven to a higher, until he attains *nibbāna.* The *Puggala-Paññatti* provides some detail:

A being, through elimination of the five lower fetters *(saṃyojana),* is reborn in a higher world (*i.e. suddhāvāsa,* the pure abodes), and without returning from that world (into the sensuous sphere), he there attains *nibbāna.*

**1**. He may, immediately after appearing there (in the pure abodes) or without having lived more than half a lifetime there, attain the holy path for overcoming the higher fetters. Such a being is called one who reaches *nibbāna* during the middle of his life *(antarā-parinibbāyī).*

**2**. Or while living beyond the middle of his life or at the moment of his departure (from that world), he attains the holy path for overcoming the higher fetters. Such a being is called one who reaches *nibbāna* during the latter part of his life *(upahacca-parinibbāyī).*

**3**. Or with effort, he attains the holy path for overcoming the higher fetters. Such a being is called one who reaches *nibbāna* with effort *(sasaṃkhāra-parinibbāyī).*

**4**. Or without effort, he attains the holy path for overcoming of the higher fetters. Such a being is called one who reaches *nibbāna* without effort *(asaṃkhāra-parinibbāyī).*

**5**. Or after vanishing from the heaven of the *avihā* gods *(i.e. suddhāvāsa),* he appears in the heaven of the unworried *(atappā)* gods. After vanishing from there, he appears in the heaven of the clearly visible *(sudassā)* gods, and thence in the heaven of the clear-sighted *(sudassī)* gods, and thence in the heaven of the highest *(akaniṭṭha)* gods. And there he attains the holy path for the overcoming of the higher fetters. Such a being is called one who passes upstream to the highest *(uddhaṃ-sota akaniṭṭha-gāmī)* gods.

*Puggala-Paññatti 42–46; cf. in "Anāgāmī," Buddhist Dictionary, PBD*

See also: **arhat**.

1. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 33, *Sangīti Sutta, PTSD3* p.237; *Anguttara Nikāya* 3:87, *Sekhin Sutta, PTSA1* p.233; *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* 36–37; Nāgārjuna, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra* 36:1.3.4, 36:1.6.2, 49:7.4, *TVW3* pp.1137, 1163, *TVW5* pp.1830–31.

**anchorite**, **anchoress** (Gk. *anachōrētēs,* L. *anchorita*) A religious solitary, man or woman; specifically, one who seeks to pass their entire life in their anchorage or place of enclosure. In early times, they were free to return to normal life should they so wish, but in medieval times that liberty was withdrawn. With the appropriate ceremonies, anchorites were 'enclosed' for life. They were licensed by a bishop, and lived according to a rule, under the guidance of their spiritual director. In medieval times, there were anchorages in churches, monasteries, convents, and castles. Probably as many men as women chose such a life, the most well-known English anchoresses being Julian of Norwich, author of *Revelations of Divine Love.*

Modern perceptions of anchorages are mostly inaccurate. Many anchorages consisted of two or three rooms; some were surrounded by their own walled gardens. Anchorites were permitted visitors, even those who stayed, and some had servants who did the shopping and maintained necessary contacts with the outside world. It is known, for instance, that Julian of Norwich had two servants, Sara and Alice. Sometimes, anchorites would have their own farm animals. Some anchoresses lived in adjacent cells, with maids and a cook to wait on them. They were even able, on occasion to move their anchorage. Nevertheless, it was a difficult and austere life, and the ecclesiastical authorities took care that only those were admitted who were self-supporting in one way or another, were able to cope, and who felt truly called to such a life.[1] Even so, not all anchorites found the life conducive to closer contact with God. Some became unbalanced; others ran away; only a few, like Julian of Norwich, had experiences of divine grace.

Some insight into the daily life of the desert anchorites of old is glimpsed in an account of the life of a certain Abba Philimon:

> It is said that Abba Philimon, the anchorite, lived for a long time enclosed in a certain cave not far from the Lavra of the Romans. There he engaged in the life of ascetic struggle, always asking himself the question which, it is reported, the great Arsenios used to put to himself: "Philimon, why did you come here?" He used to plait ropes and make baskets, giving them to the steward of the Lavra in exchange for a small ration of bread. He ate only bread and salt, and even that not every day. In this way he took no thought for the flesh but, initiated into ineffable mysteries through the pursuit of contemplation, he was enveloped by divine light and established in a state of joyfulness.
>
> When he went to church on Saturdays and Sundays, he walked alone in deep thought, allowing no one to approach him lest his concentration should be interrupted. In church, he stood in a corner, keeping his face turned to the ground and shedding streams of tears. For, like the holy father, and especially like his great model Arsenios, he was always full of contrition, and kept the thought of death continually in his mind.
>
> *On Abba Philimon, Philokalia, PCT2 p.344*

Not all solitaries were averse to human interaction, as in another story concerning the desert fathers:

> A brother went to see an anchorite, and as he was leaving said to him, "Forgive me, *abba,* for having taken you away from your rule." But the other answered him, "My rule is to refresh you and send you away in peace."
>
> *Wisdom of the Desert Fathers 151, in WDF p.42*

An over-zealous approach, even to the admittedly extreme life of the anchorite, was not generally recommended. Hence, Walter Hilton, himself probably a solitary at some time in his life, counsels an anchoress to relax a little, and find God even in those who call on her:

> You may say that you cannot avoid hearing about worldly matters because all kinds of people often come to talk with you, and sometimes tell unedifying tales. I answer that conversation with your fellow men cannot do you any great harm, and is sometimes helpful if you employ it wisely; for in this way you may test the reality of your love towards your fellow men, whether it is great or small.
>
> Like all other Christians, it is your duty to have a true love for your fellows and, when possible to show this love in practice, as well as you are able. And although you are an enclosed anchoress and unable to leave your cell to seek opportunities of helping your fellow men by acts of mercy, you are still bound to love them all in your heart, and to show clear signs of this love to all who come to you.
>
> So when someone wishes to speak to you, whoever it may be, and you have no idea who and what he is, or why he comes, always be ready and willing to find out what he wants. Do not be aloof, or keep him waiting a long time. Think how ready and glad you would be if an angel came from heaven to speak to you. Be equally ready and willing to speak to your fellow Christian when he visits you; for until you have asked him, you do not know who he is, why he comes, or what he may want of you or you of him. And although you may be at prayer and reluctant to abandon it, thinking that it is not proper to leave God in order to speak to man, I do not think you would be right in this instance; for if you are wise, you will not leave God by so doing. You will find Him, possess him, and see Him as fully in your fellow man as in prayer, but it will be in a different way.
>
> If you have a true love for your fellow men, it will be no hindrance to your prayer if you talk with them discreetly, and I think that your discretion should be exercised in this way. When someone comes to you, ask him humbly what he wants. If he comes to tell you his troubles and receive comfort, give him a ready hearing and allow him to say

> what he wishes to ease his heart. When he has ended, comfort him as kindly and lovingly as you can, but do it briefly. If he then proceeds to tell idle tales or gossip about other people's doings, make little comment and do not encourage him: he will soon get tired of it and depart.
>
> Should one of the clergy come to instruct you, respect his office and listen to him humbly. If his words are helpful, ask any questions you wish, but do not presume to instruct him: it is not proper for you to instruct a priest except in necessity. If his words afford little help, answer little, and he will soon take his leave. And should anyone come to bring you a gift, seek your advice, or receive instruction, speak kindly and humbly to them all. Do not rebuke anyone for their faults; it is not your responsibility unless you happen to know the person well and are sure that he will take it from you. In short, if you think that your advice will be of spiritual service to your neighbour, say what you will if he will listen. Otherwise, keep silence, and people will soon cease to trouble you. This is my advice; do better if you can.
>
> *Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:83, LPH pp.100–2*

See also: **hermit**, **monk**, **solitary**.

1. See Clifton Walters, in *Fire of Love, FLRR* p.18, and in *Revelations of Divine Love, RDL* pp.21–25.

**anointed one** (Gk. *christos,* L. *christus,* He. *mashi´aḥ*) See **mashi´aḥ**.

**antarā-parinibbāyī** (Pa) *Lit.* one who attains enlightenment *(parinibbāyī)* during the middle *(antarā)* of his life in one of the heavenly realms *(suddhāvāsa);* one of the five kinds of *anāgāmīs* (non-returners). See **anāgāmin**.

**apostle** (Gk. *apostolos*) One who is sent; a messenger, an envoy, an ambassador; in Christian literature, the twelve apostles appointed by Jesus during his lifetime to go out and spread his teachings; also 'the apostle', Paul, self-proclaimed apostle to the Gentiles. In later times, some of the Christian saints were sometimes called apostles, such as Francis Xavier (apostle of Japan), Ramón Lull (apostle of Africa), and St Denys (apostle of France). The epithet is also used for the third-century Iranian mystic Mānī (also called the Apostle or Messenger of Light) and the Prophet Muḥammad (also called the Apostle or Messenger of God).

According to the story related in *Acts,* after the death of Jesus, the apostles – gathered together to celebrate the Jewish festival of the Pentecost – are suddenly

"filled with the Holy Ghost", which gives them the power to speak in languages with which they were previously unfamiliar. Pentecost (Gk. *pentēkostē,* fiftieth) is the name given by Hellenistic Jews to the *Ḥag ha-Shavuot* ('Festival of Weeks'). The day commemorates the giving of the *Torah* (Law) to Moses on Mount Sinaii, fifty days (seven weeks plus one day) after the escape of the Jews from slavery in Egypt (celebrated at the Passover):

> And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
>
> *Acts 2:1–4, KJV*

The story is related by Luke, who was not present, and is writing as the event was described several decades later. Unless the story is taken literally and unquestioningly, it seems likely that it is not a precise description of what actually took place. Probably, the disciples were inspired either collectively or individually by the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost, otherwise known as the Word of God, and they heard the inner sound and saw the inner light. The speaking "with other tongues" is perhaps an explanation as to how twelve local Jewish men had the languages needed to talk to people of other nations. The reality is, however, that both Jesus and his disciples would almost certainly have been educated at the Sanhedrin schools, and probably spoke reasonable Greek – the *lingua franca* of the times – and possibly other languages in addition to their native Aramaic. It is certainly implied in John's gospel that Philip (a Greek name) spoke Greek (he is depicted as interpreter for some Greeks),[1] and Matthew the tax collector must have been able to converse with his 'clientele'.

See also: **ambassador**, **Apostle of Light**, **envoy**, **messenger**.

1. *John* 12:20–21.

**Apostle of Light** (Parthian *Fryshtgrwshn*) An epithet of the third-century Iranian mystic Mānī; sometimes simply as Apostle (Parthian *Fryshtg;* Middle Persian *Freshtag*); also translated as the 'Envoy of Light' and the 'Messenger of Light'; also known as the Apostle of Jesus Christ. In these contexts, the term refers to a saint, a mystic, a prophet, or a saviour.

Manichaean texts maintain that all the great saviours, including Zarathushtra, Buddha, Jesus, and Mānī, have been inspired by the Great

*Nous,* the Intelligence or Mind of God, or His creative power. The *Nous* is thus termed the "Father of all Apostles". Speaking to the soul, lost in this world, a Manichaean hymn asserts:

> For your sake did the apostles shine forth
> and became manifest, revealing the Light above,
> uncovering the root of darkness.
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angād Rōshnān VI:61; cf. MHCP pp.150–51*

See also: **envoy**.

**ʿāqil** (A/P) (pl. A. *ʿāqilūn, ʿuqalā',* P. *ʿāqilān*) *Lit.* prudent, judicious, intelligent, sensible, rational, wise, sagacious; an intelligent man, an intellectual, a sage, a wise man; related to *ʿaql* (intellect, reason, intelligence); also, in Sufism, a spiritual master, regarded as essential to followers of the Way. Rūmī says that such a sage is the true servant of God, his spirit soaring to the divine heights:

> The Prophet said to ʿAlī,
> "O ʿAlī, you are the Lion of God, you are a courageous knight,
> but do not even rely upon your lion-heartedness:
> come into the shade of the palm tree of hope.
> Come into the shade of the sage *(ʿāqil)*
> whom no conveyer can carry off from the Way.
> His shadow on the earth is like Mount Qāf,
> his spirit is the *Sīmurgh* that soars exceedingly high.
> If I should recount his qualities until the Resurrection,
> expect no conclusion or end to them.
> The divine Sun has veiled Himself in man:
> apprehend (this mystery), and God knows best what is right.
> O ʿAlī, above all devotional acts in the Way
> choose the shadow of the servant of God *(bandah-'i Ilāh).*
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2959–65; cf. MJR2 pp.161–62*

Only with the help of a sage can the inner enemy – the *nafs* (lower mind) – be overcome:

> Go, take refuge in the shadow of the sage *(ʿāqil),*
> that you may escape from the enemy that secretly oppresses you.
> Of all acts of devotion, this is the best for you.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2967–68; cf. MJR2 p.162*

The term is also used for scholars and intellectuals *(ʿāqilān),* who are generally regarded so highly by the world. Rūmī likens them to children

who cry when deprived of broken pieces of pottery, or to wealthy men who quiver with anxiety lest they lose the property they think to be their own.[1] He continues:

> Such is the trembling of those learned scholars *(ʿālimān),*
> who have the intelligence and knowledge of this world.
> Referring to these accomplished and intelligent men *(ʿāqilān),*
> God said in the *Qurʾān,* "They do not know."[2]
> Each is afraid that someone may steal his time and work:
> for he fancies that he possesses a great deal of knowledge.
> He says, "They are wasting my time,"
> but in truth he has no time that is profitable.
> He says, "The people have taken me away from my work,"
> but his soul is plunged in idleness up to the throat.
> He is like a frightened and naked man who thinks,
> "I am trailing a long coat:
> how can I save my coat from their clutches?"
> He knows a hundred thousand superfluous things
> connected with the various sciences,
> but that unrighteous man does not know his own soul.
> He knows the special properties of every substance,
> but in understanding his own essence,
> he is as ignorant as an ass.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī III:2642–49; cf. MJR4 p.148*

Ḥāfiẓ simply calls such 'sages', "head-bangers":

> The sages *(ʿāqilān)* are considered
> the centre of the compass of existence;
> Yet love knows that in its circle,
> they are just head-bangers.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.71, DIH p.148; cf. DHWC (221:2) p.404*

See also: **ḥakīm**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:2636–41; *cf. MJR4* p.148.
2. *Qurʾān* 30:6.

**araṇyavāsin**, **araṇyavāsī**, **āraṇyaka** (S), **āraññaka**, **āraññika** (Pa), **ālánré** (C), **arannya** (J) *Lit.* dwelling in *(vāsin)* the forest *(araṇya);* belonging to the forest *(āraṇya, āraṇyaka, āraññaka, āraññika);* a person of the forest, a forester, a forest dweller; renunciate, hermit, recluse, ascetic. *Araṇya* (forest, wilderness) is from the Sanskrit *araṇa* (remote).

In Hinduism, an *āraṇyaka,* more commonly called a *vānaprastha,* is someone who has entered the third stage *(āshrama)* of traditional *brāhmaṇ* life, following that of the student or celibate young man *(brahmachārin)* and the householder *(gṛihastha),* and prior to that of the complete renunciate *(sannyāsin).*

There is also a class of Vedic literature allied to the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upanishads,* which are called the *Āraṇyakas* (forest treatises), so called because they are believed to have been composed or studied in the forest and were written with forest dwellers in mind. The concluding portions of the *Āraṇyakas* and *Brāhmaṇas* are usually the older *Upanishads,* probably written around the fifth to fourth centuries BCE. Generally speaking, among the various classes of Vedic literature, the *Saṃhitās* (collections of verses) were intended to mould the lives of the young *brahmachārins* (unmarried students); the *Brāhmaṇas* guided the lives and religious practices of householders; the *Āraṇyakas,* which explain the symbolic meaning of the various Vedic rites and sacrifices and represent a step towards an understanding of their interior meaning, were intended for forest dwellers who were preparing themselves for full renunciation *(sannyāsa);* and the *Upanishads* were directed at *sannyāsins* (renunciates).

In Buddhism, an *āraṇyaka* (S) or *arañña*ka (Pa., also called a *vanavāsin*) is a monk who dwells in the forest. His ideal is to emulate the lifestyle of the Buddha, and that of many among the early community *(sangha)* of disciples, by dwelling in remote places, away from village life, perhaps returning to a monastic community *(sangha)* only for the four months of the rainy season or once a fortnight for recitation of the *pātimokkha* (monastic code).[1]

The primary focus of an *araṇyavāsin* is meditation, as contrasted with those whose focus is more on the study of texts. The forest-dwelling monk is essentially a *Theravāda* tradition. The term is particularly applied to those who observe the stringent austerities known as the thirteen *dhutangas* (Pa., Thai *thudong*), relating especially to the basic food, clothing, dwelling and sleeping places considered suitable for an *arañña*ka.

Long regarded as a minority group, the tradition was revived in Thailand during the twentieth century by a number of *Theravāda* monks in response to the scholarly nature of urban Thai monasteries, which had become centres of learning and scholarship rather than meditation. In the Western world, the movement has gained adherents in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Well known among these reformist monks were Ajahn Sao Kantasilo Mahathera (1861–1941), together with his student Mun Bhuridatta (1870–1949), followed later by Ajahn Thate (1902–1994), Ajahn Maha Bua (1913–2011), and Ajahn Chah (1918–1992).

The Buddha himself speaks of the peace of deserted places, though he also observes that any place is delightful if an enlightened person *(arahanta)* lives there:

Delightful is the place where *arahantas* dwell,
whether in a village or a forest, in a valley or on a hill.
Delightful are the forests *(arañña)* where people find no delight:
there will the passionless rejoice, for they seek no sensual pleasures.

*Dhammapada 7:9–10; cf. DPN, DPR*

Other sources pick up on the theme, and extol the life of a forest dweller:

If nobody is to be found, in front of one or behind one,
that is exceedingly pleasant for the lonely forest *(vana)* dweller.
So be it! I will go alone to the forest *(arañña),* praised by Buddha:
for the self-resolute monk *(bhikkhu),* dwelling alone, it is pleasant.
Pleasing, and joyful to sages *(yogī),* haunted by rutting elephants,
seeking my goal alone, quickly will I go to the wild forest *mahāvana).*

*Theragāthā 10:537–41, PTST p.57, KNAO*

Similarly, the Buddha is asked:

Those living in the forest *(arañña),* peaceful and calm,
of pure life, eating but one meal a day:
How is it they appear so radiant?

*Saṃyutta Nikāya 1:10, Arañña Sutta, PTSS1 p.5; cf. SNJI*

And he replies:

They sorrow not for what is past,
they have no longing for the future,
the present is sufficient for them:
That is why they appear so radiant.
By longing for the future,
by sorrowing over what is past:
By this, fools are withered up as a cut-down tender reed.

*Saṃyutta Nikāya 1:10, Arañña Sutta, PTSS1 p.5; cf. SNJI*

Forest-dwelling is among a number of ascetic practices commonly associated in Buddhist texts with venerated monks. They are portrayed, for example, as "a forest dweller *(āraññika),* an alms-food eater, a rag-robe wearer, an owner of only one set of three robes, modest, content, solitary, unentangled, his enthusiasm (for the spiritual life) aroused, an advocate of ascetic practices, devoted to the elevated mind."[2]

Further details concerning the practice of these aspects of the ascetic life are detailed in the analytical and commentarial texts such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* – especially in a chapter explaining these ascetic practices

*(dhutanga-niddesa),* a significant portion of which is devoted to the "forest dweller *(āraññika)*".[3]

In order to endure a solitary life in the forest, a monk must already possess some basic qualities to enable him to gain some advantage from the solitude, rather than simply engaging without guidance in a distressing struggle with his lower nature:

> Endowed with four qualities, a monk is not fit to stay in isolated forest and wilderness dwellings *(arañña vanapatthāni pantāni senāsanāni).* Which four? With thoughts of sensuality, . . . ill will, . . . and harmfulness, and if he is a person of weak discernment – a dull and drooling idiot. . . .
>
> Endowed with four qualities, a monk is fit to stay in isolated forest and wilderness dwellings *(arañña vanapatthāni pantāni senāsanāni).* Which four? With thoughts of renunciation, . . . non-ill will, . . . and harmlessness, and if he is a discerning person – not a dull and drooling idiot.
>
> *Anguttara Nikāya 4:259, Āraññika Sutta, PTSA2 p.252; cf. ANTB*

The *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* devotes considerable space to the conduct and qualities expected of a "forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)*". Much of Buddhist philosophy regarding the conduct and practice of a monk is summarized in these verses:

> Mahākāshyapa asked the Buddha, "World-Honoured One, when a monk declares himself to be a forest-dwelling monk (*āraṇyaka-bhikshu,* a monk dwelling in a forest hermitage) – how does such a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* live, O World-Honoured One, one who begs for his food, . . . wears a garment of cast-off rags, . . . lives beneath the trees, . . . wanders in graveyards, . . . and lives in the open air?"
>
> The Buddha answered Kāshyapa, "A forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* enjoys living in a forest hermitage. Kāshyapa, he dwells in a forest hermitage where there are no loud noises and no large crowds. He remains in seclusion, away from deer, tigers, wolves, flying birds, robbers, cowherds, or shepherds. He follows the *shramaṇa*'s forest-dwelling spiritual practice *(dharma).* Such a monk, if he wishes to live in a forest hermitage, should keep eight thoughts in mind. What are these eight thoughts?
>
> "One, to disregard the body.
> Two, to be indifferent to life.
> Three, to give up material possessions.
> Four, to forsake all beloved places and places of pleasure.

Five, to die on a mountain, like a deer.
Six, to adopt the way of life of a forest dweller *(āraṇyaka)* living in a forest hermitage.
Seven, to live by the *Dharma.*
Eight, to exist without passions and delusions *(kleshas).*

"Kāshyapa, these are the eight. These are the thoughts that a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* should keep in mind. When his thoughts are like this, then he can go to a forest hermitage.

"Kāshyapa, after a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* has reached a forest hermitage, then he should practise the way *(dharma)* of a forest-dweller *(āraṇyaka).* He should practise eight ways of cultivating kindness towards all living beings. What are these eight?

"One, to see the benefits of kindness.
Two, to take pleasure in being kind.
Three, not to hate.
Four, to be impartial.
Five, not to discriminate among sentient beings.
Six, to be accepting.
Seven, to understand all *dharmas* (paths).
Eight, to be as pure as emptiness.

"Kāshyapa, these are the eight ways of cultivating kindness towards all living beings."

*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra 44, T11 310:644b10–c1*

The Buddha then observes that, although there is no one to observe the monk in his solitude, he should feel that there are nevertheless a host of witnesses to what he does and what he thinks:

"Kāshyapa, after a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* has arrived at his forest hermitage, he should think, 'I have come to this forest hermitage alone, with no companion. There is no one to teach me or to reproach me whether I practise virtue or not.' He should further think, 'However, there are *devas* (deities), ghosts, spirits, and *buddhas,* the world-honoured ones, who stand as my witnesses. They will know whether I apply myself to one-pointed (inner) concentration. Now I am here to devote myself to the practice *(dharma)* of a forest-dweller *(āraṇyaka).* But I shall not attain self-mastery, if I do not perfect my mind. Now I am in this hermitage all alone; I have no close associations and have nothing to call my own. I should now be mindful of desire, hatred, anger, and other negative emotions. I should not be like

> worldly people who seek pleasures and live in towns and villages. If I am, I shall be deceiving the *devas* (deities), ghosts, and spirits; and the *buddhas* will not be happy to see me. If I now practise as befits a forest-dweller *(āraṇyaka),* the *devas* (deities), ghosts, and spirits will not reprimand me, and the *buddhas* will be happy to see me.'"
>
> *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra 44, T11 310:644c2–12*

Furthermore, such a monk should behave correctly in all aspects of his life, diligently applying himself to the Buddhist ideals and way of life. Like much of Buddhist literature, this inventory is a reproduction of standard Buddhist doctrine. In fact, a few of the items listed, such as "to earn an honest living in a proper way", are not necessarily applicable to a monk who lives in solitude and begs for his food. The "six senses *(shaḍ-āyatana)*" are the mind and its five outgoing aspects that are closely associated with the five physical senses; the four foundations *(ṛiddhipāda)* are determination, effort, perseverance, and self-examination; and the "five aggregates *(skandhas)*", "four elements *(mahābhūtas)*", "three realms *(triloka)*" and so on are all commonly mentioned aspects of Buddhist philosophy:

> "Kāshyapa, when a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇya-bhikshu)* lives in a forest hermitage, in order to attain liberation, his practice *(dharma)* should conform to the good conduct *(shīla)* of a forest-dweller *(āraṇyaka):*
>
> "To keep all the precepts perfectly,
> and to purify his thoughts, words, and deeds;
> Not to engage in flattery or fraud;
> To earn an honest living;
> To devote his mind to the *dhyānas* (absorptions),
> according to the teachings of the *Dharma;*
> To remind himself constantly to practise
> right intention with diligence;
> To travel on the path towards *nirvāṇa,* the cessation of desire;
> To fear *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death);
> To consider the five *skandhas* (aggregates) as enemies,
> the four *mahābhūtas* (elements) as poisonous snakes,
> and the six *āyatanas* (senses) as a temporary assemblage
> in the body, having no underlying reality;
> To be adept in the use of *upāya* (skilful means);
> To reflect upon the twelve *nidānas*
> (causes in the chain of existence),
> in order to be freed from the illusion of permanence;

To contemplate the illusory nature of all living beings,
of ego, of individuals, and of life;
To understand that awareness of the unreality of phenomena
accompanies attainment of the absolute Truth;
To diminish actions by degrees and to practise non-action;…
To be ever diligent in practice of the *Dharma,*
as though his head would otherwise be burned;
To strive constantly with great effort and never regress;
To turn inwards in order to understand the unreality of the body,
and find the absolute Truth;
To meditate in order to know the source of suffering
and to sever the cause of suffering;
To find proof by practising mind-stilling meditation;
To practise the path assiduously;
To cultivate kindness;…
To master the four foundations of supernatural power.

"Kāshyapa, the *dharmas* (teachings) thus expounded are adornments. Adorning himself with them, a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* should live in a mountain grove, diligently devoting himself to these (spiritual) practices even in the early and later parts of the night, without falling sleep, always eager to attain the highest spiritual *Dharma.*"

*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra 44, T11 310:644c12–24, 27–28*

The text then continues with further advice for the "forest-dwelling monk":

"Kāshyapa, a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* should continuously cultivate the path wherever he may be; he should not adorn himself with fine garments; he should use only dry grass as his seat; he should not accept things from resident or visiting monks. In a forest hermitage, he should be content with any garment that is sufficient to cover himself, for the sake of practising the noble path.

"Kāshyapa, should a forest-dwelling monk *(āraṇyaka-bhikshu)* go to a town or village to beg for food, he should think, 'I have come from my forest hermitage to this village for food. Whether I procure it or not, my mind should be neither depressed nor elated. If I am given no food, I should be happy, considering it to be the karmic consequence of (actions performed in) my previous lives. From now on I will assiduously cultivate virtuous actions.' Moreover, he should remind himself that even the Tathāgata did not always obtain food when he begged for it."

*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra 44, T11 310:644c28–645a7*

Such a monk should (among other things) entertain neither attraction nor aversion for anything; should keep his "gaze no further than a short distance in front of him"; should "control his mind"; should share half his food with the poor; should leave any excess "on a clean stone" for the "birds and animals"; should be content when he has insufficient to eat, thinking that this will keep him feeling light, enabling him "to sleep little, and to have no desire"; should have no fear of "tigers or wolves" or other wild animals, thinking that if they eat him it will be a blessing because he will be rid of his "fragile body" and because he would not otherwise have been able to provide them with food; should entertain neither "attraction nor aversion" for any non-human form that may appear before him, whether beautiful or ugly; should answer any questions put to him by a god, and admit ignorance if unable to answer such a question and ask the god for guidance on the matter; and he should arrive at the realization that external things have no real identity – everything, including the body, arises and disperses according to the combination and variety of circumstances. Should a monk follow all this successfully, promises the text, he will, to a greater or lesser extent, rapidly fulfil his aspirations.[4]

The *sūtra* then concludes this section with the observation:

> During this discourse on the forest dweller *(āraṇyaka),* five hundred monks eliminated all their impurities *(āsrava)* and attained liberation *(mukti).*
>
> *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra 44, T11 310:645c21–22*

See also: **ṛiddhipāda** (7.3), **shramaṇa**, **vānaprastha**, **vanavāsin**.

1. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 77, *Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta, PTSM2* p.8.
2. *Udāna* 4, *Piṇḍola Sutta, PTSU* p.42; *cf. KNTB; cf. Theragāthā* 19:1125, *PTST* p.100; *Majjhima Nikāya* 5 *(Anangaṇa Sutta),* 32 *(Mahāgosinga Sutta),* 77 *(Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta),* 86 *(Angulimāla Sutta),* 113 *(Sappurisa Sutta), PTSM1* pp.30–31, 214, 217, *PTSM2* pp.5–9, 102, *PTSM3* pp.40–42; *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 15:13 *(Tiṃsamatta Sutta),* 16:5 *(Jiṇṇa Sutta), PTSS2* pp.187, 202.
3. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 2:9–56, *PTSV* pp.59–74, *passim.*
4. *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* 44, *T11* 310:644c27–645c21.

**arbāb al-lisān** (A) *Lit.* lords *(arbāb)* of the tongue *(lisān);* garrulous people; among Sufis, those who speak much, but know little.

See also: **lisān** (▸3).

**arhat** (S/H), **arahanta** (Pa), **dgra bcom pa** (T), **āluóhàn**, **luóhàn** (C), **arakan**, **rakan** (J) *Lit.* worthy, deserving, venerable; worthy one, accomplished one; foe-destroyer, vanquisher of enemies; an enlightened being; in Jainism, a *kevalin* – one who has attained *kevala-jñāna* (omniscience) by reaching the thirteenth *guṇasthāna,* the penultimate stage before final liberation; used as a synonym for a *Jina* or *Tīrthankara;* in Buddhism, a fully liberated and enlightened being; a *tathāgata* or a *buddha;* one who has overcome all fetters *(saṃyojanas),* imperfections *(āsravas)* and impurities *(kleshas),* and has thereby attained *nirvāṇa;* a noble disciple or noble person (S. *ārya-pudgala,* Pa. *ariya-puggala*) who has reached the fourth and last stage of enlightenment, and is no longer liable to rebirth; also, one of the ten appellations of the Buddha found in many early Buddhist texts.[1]

The etymology of the word is uncertain. *Han* is a suffix meaning 'killing' or 'destruction' and *ari* means 'hostile', hence *ari* + *han* could mean destruction *(han)* of enemies *(ari).* This is the meaning generally understood in the Jain tradition, conforming with *jina* (conqueror), a term used in both Buddhism and Jainism. This interpretation also tallies with the Tibetan translation, *dgra bcom pa* (destroyer of the foes of suffering). Buddhist Pali sources, however, derive the term from *araha* (S. *arha*), meaning worthy of or deserving. The Japanese *arakan* and the Chinese *āluóhàn,* often shortened to *rakan* and *luóhàn* respectively, are phonetic renderings of the Sanskrit word.

According to Jain philosophy, an *arhat* is a soul who has reached the thirteenth stage of spiritual evolution after the destruction of the four *ghātīya* (covering) *karmas:*

> That pure *(shuddha)* soul existing in an auspicious body, possessed of (infinite) faith, happiness, knowledge and power, and which has destroyed the four *ghātīya karmas,* is to be meditated on as an *arhat.*
>
> *Dravya Sangraha 50; cf. DSNS p.76*

The four *ghātīya karmas – jñāna-āvaraṇīya* (knowledge-obscuring), *darshana-āvaraṇīya* (vision-obscuring), *mohanīya* (deluding) and *antarāya* (hindering) – are so called because they obscure the true nature of the soul. When these four types of *karma* are removed, the pure soul or *arhat* experiences full knowledge, perfect vision, infinite happiness, and limitless power. An *arhat* is regarded as pure *(shuddha)* because he has overcome the eighteen weaknesses or limitations of hunger, thirst, fear, aversion, attachment, illusion, anxiety, old age, sickness, death, fatigue, perspiration, pride, displeasure, astonishment, birth, sleep, and sorrow.[2] Other lists of the eighteen limitations from which the *arhat* is free include lust, anger, hatred, desires, laughing, and ignorance.[3]

In Buddhism, after the rise of *Mahāyāna* (a later development than *Theravāda*), *arhat* became a primarily *Theravāda* term, contrasted with the

*Mahāyāna* ideal in which the seeker of enlightenment takes the *bodhisattva* vow to continue coming to this world until all sentient beings have become enlightened. An *arhat* is a perfected human being. As such, although he still has to undergo the effects of his *karma* from previous births, he is otherwise understood to have gone beyond the limitations of morality and *karma.* His actions are spontaneously true, right, selfless, and moral; they are regarded as having no karmic consequences. An *arhat* is an exemplar for all humankind and, in *Theravāda* practice, *arhats* of the past are subject to considerable veneration, particularly so in the monasteries of East Asia, where special halls house images of the five hundred *arhats,* while up and down the monastery walls are groups of the sixteen or eighteen *arhats.* The legend of the five hundred *arhats* originates from the first Buddhist Council, held a year after the Buddha's death (*c.*542 BCE or later), and attended, according to tradition, by five hundred *arhats.*

Technically, it is said that an *arhat* is different from a *buddha* in that an *arhat* requires a teacher in order to reach *nirvāṇa,* whereas a *buddha* does not. In practice, however, a *buddha* is often addressed as an *arhat,* having attained the same goal. *Mahāyāna,* with its *bodhisattva* ideal, has come to depict the *arhat* as selfishly preoccupied with *nirvāṇa.* The *bodhisattva,* by contrast, is regarded as a being of great compassion *(mahākaruṇa),* dedicated to the liberation and enlightenment of all other beings. *Mahāyāna* paintings and sculptures generally depict the *bodhisattva* as a young and graceful man or woman, with flowing hair, finely ornamented, seated on a lotus. *Arhats,* on the other hand, appear as old men, bushy eyebrowed, bent and weary, leaning on a staff, clad in a shabby monk's robe, seated on a rock or on the ocean.

*Arhats* have survived as a part of the *Mahāyāna* tradition in China and Japan. The sixteen *arakan* of Japanese (especially *Zen*) Buddhism and eighteen *luóhàn* of the Chinese *Mahāyāna* tradition are understood to be *bodhisattvas* who were once original followers of the Buddha. Having attained liberation, at the time of the Buddha's passing into final *nirvāṇa (parinirvāṇa),* they were charged with protecting the *Dhamma* (Way) until the arrival of Maitreya, regarded as the next Buddha to incarnate on earth, at some time in the distant future. Although forest-dwelling renunciates *(araṇyavāsins),* they were asked to be available to the Buddhist laity so that the faithful could acquire merit through the presentation of offerings. Tradition has it that in order to fulfil the Buddha's request, they used supernatural powers to prolong their lives indefinitely, and that they can still be contacted in time of need. Even in present times, images of the sixteen *arakan* are found in Japanese temples, to which offerings are made.

According to Buddhist philosophy, ten fetters hold beings to the wheel of birth and death. The first five create bondage to the material world; the remaining five result in bondage to the finer, higher, or heavenly worlds. The

five lower fetters are: belief in the illusion of a personal self *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi),* doubt concerning the Buddha and his doctrines *(vicikicchā),* clinging to the practice of rituals *(sīlabbata-parāmāsa),* sensual craving *(kāmarāga),* and ill will or resentment *(vyāpāda, dosa).* Four stages on the way to enlightenment are commonly mentioned, especially in the Pali *Nikāyas,* and are distinguished by how many of and to what degree these fetters have been surmounted, the final stage being that of the *arahanta:*

**1**. *Sotāpanna* (Pa. stream-enterer). One who has just begun the search for spiritual realization, and has overcome the first three fetters. A *sotāpanna* is traditionally assured of attaining *nibbāna* in seven lives at the most *(sattakkhattu-parama).*

**2**. *Sakadāgāmī* (Pa. once-returner). One who has overcome the first three fetters in their gross form and has weakened the remaining two (*kāma* and *dosa,* lust and anger), but is still liable to one more birth before attaining liberation; also called *eka-bījī* (having only one seed, germinating only once more).

**3**. *Anāgāmī* (Pa. non-returner). One who has overcome all of the five lower fetters, and is no longer liable to rebirth in this world, but will spend some time in the heavenly regions before attaining liberation. The *anāgāmī* has still to overcome the five higher fetters: craving for pleasures of the subtle material world *(rūparāga),* craving for immaterial pleasures in the higher worlds *(arūparāga),* conceit *(māna),* restlessness *(uddhacca),* and spiritual ignorance *(avijjā).*

**4**. *Arahanta* (Pa. a noble one, a holy one). One who is fully liberated, and does not have to take another birth here or elsewhere; one who has overcome the lower and higher fetters, and has attained *nibbāna.*

*Theravāda* further subdivides each of these four stages into those who are working towards the attainment of the stage and those who have attained its fruit *(phala),* making eight categories in all. The true *arahanta* is thus one who has attained the fruit of the fourth stage.

In the *Arahanta Vagga* of the *Dhammapada,* one of the earliest Buddhist texts, some stanzas attributed to the Buddha give an indication of the inner condition of an *arahanta:*

> No suffering exists for him who has completed the journey,
> who is free from sorrow, who is free from everything,
> who has shaken off all fetters. . . .

Like an (immovable) pillar or a pool unsullied by mud,
a balanced and well-disciplined man,
like the earth, bears no resentment.
To a man such as this, *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death) is no more.

His mind is peaceful, his speech is peaceful, his actions are peaceful –
having perfectly understood the nature of freedom, he is at peace.
He who knows the Uncreated has no need of faith:
He has severed all ties, put an end to good and evil,
cast away all desire.
He, indeed, is the supreme man.

Delightful is the place where *arahantas* dwell,
whether in a village or a forest, in a valley or on a hill.

*Dhammapada 7:1, 6–9*

Those who ignore the teachings of the *arahantas* or *ariyas* have to reap the fruit of their actions, just as many species of bamboo die after bearing fruit (which happens only infrequently):

The foolish man, who scorns the teaching of the *arahantas,*
the noble ones *(ariyas),* and the righteous, on account of false notions,
bears fruit to his own destruction, even as fruit of the bamboo *(kaṭṭhaka).*

*Dhammapada 12:8*

The *arahanta* is one whose inner attainment lies beyond the reach of men, spirits, and even the deities in creation. He is worthy of being called a *brāhmaṇ* (a member of the Hindu priestly caste):

Him do I call a *brāhmaṇ,* whose path even the gods know not,
neither spirits nor men;
Whose impurities are extinguished, and who has become an *arahanta.*

*Dhammapada 26:38*

The Pali Buddhist *suttas,* covering much the same ground, describe the qualities of an *arahanta* in a formulaic and repetitive manner:

An *arahanta* monk whose mental impurities are ended *(khīṇāsava),* who has reached fulfilment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and who is released through right gnosis, cannot possibly transgress these five principles: . . . to intentionally deprive a living being of life, . . . to take, in the manner of stealing, what is not given, . . . to engage in sexual

> intercourse, . . . to tell a deliberate lie, . . . to enjoy stored-up sensual things as he did before, when he was a householder; . . . (and also) to follow a bias based on desire, . . . on aversion, . . . on fear, . . . on delusion.[4]
>
> *Anguttara Nikāya 9:7, Sutavā Sutta, PTSA4 p.370; cf. ANTB*

> *Bhikkhus* (monks), there are these five faculties. What five? The faculty of faith, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, the faculty of wisdom. These are the five faculties.
>
> One who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is an *arahanta.* If they are weaker than that, one is a non-returner *(anāgāmī);* if still weaker, a once-returner *(sakadāgāmī);* if still weaker, a stream-enterer *(sotāpanna),* if still weaker, a *dhamma*-follower *(dhammānusārī);* if still weaker, a faith-follower *(saddhānusārī).*
>
> *Saṃyutta Nikāya 48:12, Sankhitta Sutta, PTSS5 p.200, CDBB p.1674*

An *arahanta* has also gone beyond the need for conceptualizing in order to understand things. He knows everything directly, as it really is, with full understanding, without need of conceptual or discursive thought:

> A monk who is an *arahanta,* devoid of mental impurities *(khīṇāsava),* . . . directly knows earth as earth. Directly knowing earth as earth, he does not conceive things about earth, does not conceive things in earth, does not conceive things coming out of earth, does not conceive earth as 'mine', does not delight in earth. Why is that? Because he has comprehended it, I tell you.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 1, Mūlapariyāya Sutta, PTSM1 p.4; cf. MNTB*

Following the same formula, the *arahanta* knows "water as water" – and likewise everything else in existence – for what it actually is. The list includes everything from the material, the lesser gods and the higher deities, up to *nibbāna* and "the All":

> Water as water, . . . fire as fire, . . . wind as wind, . . . beings as beings, . . . gods as gods, . . . *Prajāpati, . . . Brahmā, . . .* the luminous gods, . . . the gods of refulgent glory, . . . the gods of abundant fruit, . . . the dimension of the infinitude of space, . . . the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, . . . the dimension of nothingness, . . . the dimension of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, . . . the seen, . . . the heard, . . . the sensed, . . . the cognized, . . . singleness, . . . multiplicity as multiplicity, . . . the All as the All. . . .
>
> He directly knows *nibbāna* as *nibbāna.* Directly knowing *nibbāna* as *nibbāna,* he does not suppose things about *nibbāna,* does not

> suppose (himself to be) in *nibbāna,* does not suppose (himself as) coming out of *nibbāna,* does not suppose *nibbāna* to be 'mine', does not delight in *nibbāna.* Why is that? Because, I tell you, he has fully understood it.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 1, Mūlapariyāya Sutta, PTSM1 pp.4–5; cf. MDBB p.87, MNTB*

The *arahanta* has this complete understanding because he is "free from lust through the destruction of lust", "free from hate through the destruction of hate", and "free from delusion through the destruction of delusion".[5] Here, "destruction" is significant. The control or temporary absence of the passions does not give true freedom from their hold; this can only be known through their destruction.

The *arahanta* has also realized that nothing is his, and that he is identified with nothing. He is aware that:

> "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not myself," and through not clinging he is liberated.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 35, Cūlasaccaka Sutta, PTSM1 p.235, MDBB p.330*

In short, he has become free of all negativity:

> Evil unwholesome states that defile, bring renewal of being, give trouble, ripen in suffering, and lead to future birth, aging, and death, are far away from him. That is how a *bhikkhu* is an *arahanta.*
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 39, Mahā-Assapura Sutta, PTSM1 p.280, MDBB p.371*

The qualities and faculties of an *arahanta* are those of a *buddha.* He sees everything that goes on in the minds of other beings:

> The *arahanta,* the fully enlightened *buddha,* knows, sees and clearly distinguishes the different inclinations of beings.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 1, Brahmajāla Sutta, PTSD1 p.2, TBLD p.67*

He is altogether pure and perfect, knowing all things, and the spiritual path he teaches is of the highest character:

> This blessed lord is an *arahanta,* a fully enlightened *buddha,* perfected in knowledge and conduct, a well-farer, knower of the worlds, unequalled trainer of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, a *buddha,* a blessed lord. He proclaims this world with its gods, *māras* (devils), *Brahmās,* the world of *samaṇas* (holy men) and *brāhmaṇs* with its princes and people, having come to know it by his own knowledge. He teaches a *dhamma* that is lovely in its beginning, lovely in

> its middle, and lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter; and he displays the fully perfected, thoroughly purified, holy life. And indeed it is good to see such *arahantas.*
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 3, Ambaṭṭha Sutta, PTSD1 p.87, TBLD p.111*

All enlightened souls have attained the same degree of knowledge:

> All those *arahanta buddhas* of the past attained to supreme enlightenment by abandoning the five hindrances *(nīvaraṇa)* – defilements of mind which weaken understanding – having finally established the four foundations of mindfulness *(satipaṭṭhāna)* in their minds, and realized the seven factors of enlightenment *(sambojjhanga)* as they really are. All the *arahanta buddhas* of the future will do likewise.[6]
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 28, Sampasādaniya Sutta, PTSD3 p.101, TBLD p.418*

While there can be many enlightened beings on earth at one time, it is also sometimes said that there is never more than one *"arahanta* supreme *buddha"* in any "world system":

> I have also heard and received it from the blessed lord's own lips that it is not possible, it cannot be, that in one and the same world system two *arahanta* supreme *buddhas,* should arise simultaneously. No such situation can exist.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 28, Sampasādaniya Sutta, PTSD3 p.114, TBLD p.425*

Such a supreme *buddha* comes to the world solely to teach and to help others. According to the *Anguttara Nikāya:*

> Monks, there is one person whose birth into the world is for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many: who is born out of compassion for the world, for the profit, welfare and happiness of heavenly beings and mankind. Who is that person? It is a *tathāgata* who is an *arahanta,* a fully enlightened one *(sammā-sambuddha).* This, monks, is that one person.
>
> *Anguttara Nikāya 1:170, PTSA1 p.22, in TBBK p.305*

The text then continues in the familiar repetitive manner, asserting that this "one person", who is a "*tathāgata* who is an *arahanta,* a fully enlightened one" is "hard to find, . . . extraordinary, . . . incomparable", and "unequalled". He is the "the manifestation of a mighty eye, a mighty light, a mighty radiance", and his "death . . . is to be regretted by all".[7]

See also: **anāgāmin**, **nirvāṇa** (▸3), **shoḍasha sthavirāḥ**, **srotāpanna**.

1. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, passim.*
2. *Dravya Sangraha* 50, *DSNS* p.77.
3. V.R. Gandhi, *Religion and Philosophy of the Jainas, RPJG* pp.202–3.
4. *Cf. e.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 33, *Sangīti Sutta, PTSD3* p.235; *Majjhima Nikāya* 76, *Sandaka Sutta, PTSM1* p.523.
5. *Majjhima Nikāya* 1, *Mūlapariyāya Sutta, PTSM1* pp.4–5, *MDBB* pp.88–89.
6. *Dīgha Nikāya* 16, *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, PTSD2* p.83.
7. *Anguttara Nikāya* 1:170–87, *PTSA1* pp.22–23, in *TBBK* p.305.

**ʿārif** (A/P) (pl. A. *ʿurafā', ʿārifīn, ʿārifūn,* P. *ʿārifān*) *Lit.* knower, gnostic, mystic; from the same root as *maʿrifah* (gnosis); one who knows by inner mystical knowledge or experience; a knower of God; synonymous with *ʿālim al-rabbānī* (men of divine knowledge); a saint or holy man of high spiritual attainment; also, as *al-ʿĀrif* ('the Gnostic') in the writings of Rūzbihān Baqlī, an epithet of Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, who was martyred for his saying, "*Anā al-Ḥaqq* (I am God)!"; commonly contrasted with *ʿālim* (knower, scholar), from the same root as *ʿilm* (knowledge), meaning one who knows by learning or book knowledge *(ʿilm);* sometimes contrasted with the *ʿābid* (devotee of externals) and the *zāhid* (ascetic), hence the saying attributed to Abū Yazīd and others, "The gnostic *(ʿārif)* flies, while the ascetic *(zāhid)* walks."[1]

To the orthodox, *ʿilm* and *maʿrifah* mean the same. But while the virtues of *ʿilm* are extolled in the *ḥadīth* (traditional sayings and deeds of Muḥammad), *maʿrifah* is not. *Al-ʿAlīm* (the All-Knowing) is therefore a permissible name of *Allāh,* but not *al-ʿĀrif.* Sufis, however, have always accorded *maʿrifah* and the *ʿārif* a higher place in their understanding than *ʿilm* and the *ʿālim.* Hujwīrī explains:

> Theologians *(ʿulamā')* have made no distinction between *ʿilm* and *maʿrifat* (gnosis), except when they say that God may be called *ʿālim* (knowing), but not *ʿārif* (gnostic), since the latter epithet lacks divine blessing. But the *ṣūfī shaykhs* give the name of *maʿrifat* to every knowledge that arises from (spiritual) practice and experience *(ḥāl),* and the knower *(ʿālim)* of which speaks of his experiences *(aḥvāl);* and the knower thereof they call an *ʿārif.* On the other hand, they give the name of *ʿilm* to knowledge that lacks inner meaning and is devoid of spiritual practice; and one who has such knowledge they call an *ʿālim.*
>
> Therefore, a person who knows the inner meaning and spiritual reality of a thing, they call an *ʿāriḥ,* while one who has knowledge of something for its own sake, without concern for the inner reality, they call an *ʿālim.* When the *ṣūfīs* wish to chide their fellows, they call them scholars *(dānishmandān).* Although the ordinary person might object to this, it must be understood that their motive is not

> to be contemptuous of the acquisition of knowledge as such, but to reproach them (their fellows) for abandoning their devotion. For the *ʿālim* relies upon himself, while the gnostic *(ʿārif)* relies upon his Lord.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KMM p.498; cf. KM pp.382–83, in SSE6 p.74*

Rūmī, on the same theme, adds a subtle point explaining why God may not be called *al-ʿĀrif:*

> *ʿĀrif* means one who previously did not know, and then came to know, and this cannot be said of God. . . . The *ʿārif* is used to denote one who knows the world that transcends reason, by direct vision and face to face.
>
> *Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi XI:4–6, KFF p.47; cf. DRA pp.58–59, SOU p.49*

ʿAṭṭār extols gnosis and describes the true gnostic in a simple and straightforward manner, as one "who knows God":

> Strive to acquire the mystic gnosis *(maʿrifat),* so that you may learn to know God. He who truly knows God by contemplation, realizes that eternal life means passing away from the personal self. Without this knowledge, man has no real existence: he is not worthy to approach God, nor will he attain to the goal of his desires. If you really know your self and its desires, you will know God Most High and His gifts.
>
> He alone is the true gnostic *(ʿārif)* who knows God, and whoever is without this knowledge is unfit to be counted among human beings. The gnostic *(ʿārif)* has a heart full of sincere and constant love, all his actions are pure and without stain. The one to whom the gift of gnosis *(bakhshish-i maʿrifat)* has been given finds no place in his heart save for God alone.
>
> To the gnostic *(ʿārif),* this world is of no concern; nay, more, he gives no thought to himself. Gnosis *(maʿrifat)* means that the gnostic *(ʿārif)* passes away from himself into God. How can the one who does not completely pass away from self attain to this perfection? The gnostic *(ʿārif)* is occupied neither with this world nor the next: he is not concerned with any but his Lord. Because he has died altogether to himself, he is completely absorbed in the attainment of union with God.
>
> *ʿAṭṭār, Pandnāmah, PNA p.27ff., in PMA pp.88–89*

The *ʿārif billāh* (knower of God) is sometimes portrayed as the one who has realized the state described in a *ḥadīth* in which where God says, "The devotee approaches me, until I love such a one. Then I become the ears by which he hears, the eyes by which he sees, the hands by which he grasps, and the legs by which he walks."[2] That is, the *ʿārif* knows things by God, and not, like others, by concept or by His external manifestations.

Ibn al-ʿArabī says much the same when he describes gnostics as those who know God through God Himself, as compared to intellectuals who know of Him only through their reasoning. They are, he says, as far away from Him as their conceptions place Him:

> When the gnostics *(al-ʿārifūn)* know Him through Him, they become distinguished from those who know Him through their own rational consideration *(naẓar),* for they are unlimited, while others are limited. The gnostics-through-Him *(al-ʿārifūn bihi)* witness Him in every thing or in the essence of every thing, but those who know Him through rational consideration are removed far from Him by a distance resulting from their declaration of His incomparability. Hence, they place themselves on one side and the Real on the other. Then they call to Him "from a far place".[3]
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, Meccan Revelations 3:410.17, FMIA6 (4:370) p.170; cf. SPK p.110*

Sufis consider the inner state of gnostics to be preferable to the inner state of those who seek to know God by other means:

> Abū Bakr Warrāq said, "The scholar *(ʿālim)* falls short of what he teaches; the sage *(ḥakīm)* practises what he preaches; and the gnostic *(ʿārif)* and the realizer *(muḥaqqiq)* go beyond their speech."
>
> *Anṣārī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah 229, TSAA pp.262–63, in SSE6 p.72*

> Nahrajūrī said, "The worshipper *(ʿābid)* prays to God out of fear, while the gnostic *(ʿārif)* in union worships God in a spiritual state."
>
> *Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, KTS p.69, in FNI6 p.91, in SSE6 p.73*

Among the many Sufi definitions of the *ʿārif,* all are agreed that the *ʿārif* experiences a higher form of knowledge, and a superior relationship with God. The *Mirʾāt-i ʿUshshāq* describes the *ʿārif* as "one who subsists in God",[4] and *Laṭīfah-ʾi Ghaybī* as "one who is privy to God's secrets",[5] while Javād Nūrbakhsh writes:

> The gnostic *(ʿārif)* is said to be the one who knows God by way of unveiling *(kashf)* and vision *(shuhūd),* not by way of reason *(ʿaql)* and reasoning *(istidlāl);* through ecstasy *(vajd)* and state *(ḥāl),* not verbal explanation *(qīl u qāl).*
>
> *Javād Nūrbakhsh, Sufi Symbolism, FNI6 p.86, SSE6 p.69*

Speaking of the divine light of God that permeates all creation, Tahānawī says that this is known only to the perfect gnostic; and he makes a distinction between worshipping the "face" of God, which involves separation of the worshipper from God, and becoming utterly united with His Essence:

> Whoever reaches this true light has attained the consummation of all his work. Such a true light, however, is unknown to the exoteric theologian. It takes a perfectly realized gnostic *(ʿārif-i kāmil)* to understand that whoever attains to the divine face worships God, yet is (still) a polytheist, as the Quranic verse indicates: "And most of them believe not in God, but they attribute partners unto Him,"[6] while one who attains to the divine Essence (truly) worships God and believes in divine unity.
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 p.211, in SSE4 pp.9–10*

Abū Yazīd defines the *ʿārif* as one who remains in continuous remembrance of the Divine:

> When Abū Yazīd was asked what distinguishes a gnostic *(ʿārif),* he replied, "He is one who never slackens in his remembrance of God, never gives less that his utmost to God, and never becomes intimate with what is other than God."
>
> *Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah, KTS p.64, in FNI6 p.88, in SSE6 p.70*

Similarly, Aflākī quotes Shams-i Tabrīz, who says that the *ʿārif* lives in constant communion with the divine "Friend":

> The sign of a knower of God *(ʿārif)* is that he never neglects recollection of the Friend, and he never becomes sated with His friendship. There is no food more delicious than recollection *(źikr).*... The sign of the knower of God *(ʿārif)* consists of three things: the heart's engagement with meditation *(fikrat),* the body's engagement with service *(khidmat),* and the eye's engagement with the nearness *(qurbat)* of God. Similarly, the sign of the knower of God *(ʿārif)* is that the world has no importance for him, and (thought of) the hereafter has no effect on him, and for him there is no substitute for the master *(mawlā).*
>
> *Shams-i Tabrīz, in Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 4:59, MASA2 p.654, MSK p.206; cf. FKG p.451*

This nearness to God, says Hujwīrī, instils an ever-increasing humility in the *ʿārif:*

> He (Dhū al-Nūn Miṣrī) says, for example, "The gnostic *(ʿārif)* becomes more lowly every day, because he approaches nearer to his Lord every moment." And since he thereby becomes aware of the amazing magnificence of the divine omnipotence, and when the majesty of God has taken possession of his heart, he sees how far he is from God, and that there is no way of reaching Him. Hence his lowliness is increased.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XI:9, KMM p.125; cf. KM pp.100–1*

Aflākī also relates an anecdote concerning Rūmī ("Mawlānā"), who says that an *ʿārif* such as Shaykh Ṣalāh al-Dīn knows the hidden contents of another's mind:

> It is also transmitted that one day Mawlānā was asked: "Who is a knower of God *(ʿārif)?*"
>
> He replied: "The person who speaks about your innermost secret when you have remained silent about it. And such is Shaykh Ṣalāh al-Dīn." . . . Ṣalāh al-Dīn continually communicated information from the world of invisible mystery *(ʿālam-i Ghayb al-Ghayb),* and revealed the hidden thoughts in the companions' hearts, and made known the innermost secret of inaccessible matters such that the possessor of the secret became bewildered by this vision.
>
> *Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 5:14, MASA2 pp.714–15; cf. FKG p.497*

The *ʿārif,* repeats Rūmī, is always in communion with God:

> An abundant beard is pleasing to the *ṣūfīs,* but by the time a *ṣūfī* has combed out his beard, a knower of God *(ʿārif)* has already reached God.
>
> *Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 3:355, MASA1 p.412, FKG (3:354) p.284*

Since true mystical experience begins with the escape of the soul from the body, by going through the process of dying while still living, actual physical death holds no fears for the *ʿārif.* Depicting the biblical "Joseph" as a saint – a common metaphor in Sufi, Christian and Jewish literature – Rūmī therefore writes:

> To those who know God *(ʿārifān),*
> the wind of death *(ajal)* is as soft and pleasant
> as the breeze (fragrance) of ones like Joseph.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:860; cf. MJR2 p.48*

Rūmī also says that just as the troubles of material existence drop from the mind in deep sleep, so too does the *ʿārif* forget material existence, even when awake. He appears to act, but God is working through him:

> Every night, You free the spirits from the body's snare,
> and erase impressions on the tablet of the mind.
> The spirits are set free every night from this cage:
> done with rules and talk and tale.
> At night, prisoners are unconscious of their prison,
> at night, governors are unconscious of their power.
> There is no sorrow, no thought of gain or loss,
> no preference for this person or that person.

This is the state of the *ʿārif,* even without sleep:
God said, "You would think them awake while they slept."
Shy not at this.
He is asleep, day and night, to the affairs of the world,
like a pen in the hand of the Lord.
One who sees not the hand in the writing
thinks that the writing proceeds from the pen by means of movement.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:388–94; cf. MJR2 p.24*

Saʿdī maintains that the *ʿārif* is so overwhelmed by the omnipresent power and glory of God that every part of him sings His praise:

He is independent of everyone,
and yet is gracious to all;
He is invisible to the whole world,
but still is omnipresent.
The rays of light from the curtains of His glory
are beyond the comprehension of the wise
by reason of their intensity.
Not only the tongue in the mouth of the bewildered gnostic *(ʿārif),*
but every hair on his limbs praises and eulogizes Him.

*Saʿdī, Ṭayyibāt 1:8–10, KSSS p.241, TOS p.2*

Ḥāfiẓ likewise speaks of the intoxication of the *ʿārif:*

The *ʿārif* who voyaged
into the realm of Nonexistence became intoxicated.
For he experienced the intoxication
of the world of mysteries *(ʿālam-i asrār).*

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DIH p.58; cf. DHWC (69:4) p.169*

1. Abū Yazīd Bisṭāmī, in *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'* 1, *TAN1* p.165, in *SSE6* p.72.
2. *Cf. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 8:76.509, *HSB;* in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.389, in *SSE12* p.64.
3. *Qur'ān* 41:44.
4. *Mir'āt-i ʿUshshāq,* in *TAT* p.215, in *SSE6* p.69.
5. Muḥammad al-Dārābī, *Laṭīfah-'i Ghaybī* 2, *LGMD* p.136, in *SSE6* p.69.
6. *Qur'ān* 12:106.

**ariki** (Mo) *Lit.* high chief; person of power and status; chieftain, lord, aristocrat; the firstborn male descendant in a line of firstborn male descendents of a noble or high-ranking family; leader or head of a tribe possessing good character,

wisdom, and bravery; high priest, leader or chief of a school of traditional Māori lore *(whare kura* or *whare wānanga);* also, occasionally, the supreme Being; also, a heavenly person or embodiment of the gods.

In their traditional lore, the Māori understood themselves to be descended from the *atua* (ancestral deities), and great care was taken to memorize their long lineages. With this ancestral heritage came *mana* (subtle or supernatural power), and those firstborn of a noble line were potentially of significant *mana:*

> The power of the *tapu* (sacred), coming from divine ancestors, would come with augmented force directly through to him from 'of old' in an unbroken stream to the still-living descendants. That is the reason why the *ariki,* the firstborn of a firstborn, was held in such veneration; in him was centred, not the *tapu* of only being himself, god-descended, but the *tapu* of the accumulated line of ancestors directly to the One regarded as the Supreme, distant in time but actually present in his *mana,* in the *ariki.*
>
> *Johannes Andersen, Maori Religion, MRJA p.523*

When an *ariki* had trained to become a *tohunga* or master of esoteric lore, this wealth of *mana* was potentially increased, and he was then regarded as a resting place of the gods. Such a person was *tapu* (sacred, restricted) and therefore restricted and untouchable, for it was believed that to touch anything *tapu* could result in death. Superior priests or those possessing the greatest sacred *mana* would become the *ariki* of a community. An *ariki* could hence become an extremely sacred person with many *tapu* restrictions:

> Personal *tapu* was sometimes intensified to such a degree that the ground which the *ariki* walked upon was rendered *tapu,* and thus prohibited from use by its owners.... The personal *tapu* of chiefs also extended to their personal property, particularly to articles, such as clothing and ornaments, which came in contact with the body.
>
> *Michael Shirres, Tapu, TMS p.38*

> The *ariki* of a Māori tribe is the senior male descendant of the 'elder' branch of the tribe – that is, he is a descendant of the elder son of the elder son of each generation from the time of the original ancestor down to the present day. As such, he was of old regarded almost as a god, inasmuch as he represented all that there was of *mana* and sacredness of his tribe. That he should have been regarded in this light is not astonishing, for the Māoris believed he was something more than human, in that he was the shrine of a hereditary *atua* (god), the

> guardian spirit of the tribe, and could therefore at any time communicate with the tribal gods.
>
> The mysterious *mana* of primogeniture (right of inheritance) is more fully recognized by the Polynesian than by any other people, and when we consider that to this feeling of veneration we must add the presence of the *kumanga kai* (ancestral *atua* or deity, the guardian spirit of the tribe),[1] we may be able to form some idea of the sacredness with which an *ariki* was clothed in the mind of all true Māoris. Such a man was not only *tapu* in person, but he made everything he touched so dangerously sacred as to be a source of terror to the tribe. To smoke his pipe, or drink from any vessel he had touched, was death speedy and certain at the hands of the gods, who avenge breaches of the *tapu.* These terrors were very real, yet proud was the tribe who could boast that their *ariki* was a sacred man whose blood, like that of Te Haramiti (a famous *ariki*), was so sacred that it might not be spilt even by his enemies.
>
> *Walter Gudgeon, Maori Religion, MRG p.130*

Such was the power wielded by the *ariki* that even the curses of a *tohunga* (adept, priest) who possessed the power to harm others were not regarded as evil if the *tohunga* was commanded by the *ariki:*

> The power to curse in the hands of a *tohunga* (adept, priest) was never considered evil because his work was executed at the will of an *ariki* or those of chiefly status. His powers are used reactively, that is, only when the tribe was under threat. Such was the philosophy imparted with the knowledge.
>
> *Samuel Timoti Robinson, Tohunga, TRAK p.252*

See also: **atua** (▸1), **mana** (**Māori**) (7.3), **tapu** (▸3).

1. *Kumanga kai* also means 'food left for ancestors': see "kumanga," *Dictionary of the Maori Language, DMLW.*

**ārya**, **āryaka** (S), **ariya** (Pa) (fem. S. *āryā, āryakā,* Pk. *āryikā*) *Lit.* noble, venerable, worthy, elect, sublime, superior; a noble one, a worthy one; an honourable man; a noble, distinguished, or respectable man. The term *ārya* first appears in the *Ṛig Veda,* where it refers to a group of immigrants from an area that includes what is probably now Iran (itself derived from *ārya*), and where it is contrasted with the *dasyu,* a pejorative expression referring to the local Indian people of the time. The original use of *ārya* seems to have been to define a racial distinction, but in time, it came to mean noble, venerable, and so forth.

In Jainism and Buddhism, an *ārya* is one who has attained or is in the process of attaining higher wisdom, also called (in Buddhism) an *ārya-pudgala* (noble person, Pa. *ariya-puggala*). *Ārya* appears in expressions such as *ārya-ashṭānga-mārga* (noble eightfold path, Pa. *ariya-aṭṭhangika-magga*), *chatvāri ārya-satyāni* (four noble truths, Pa. *cattāri ariya-saccāni*), *ārya-prajñā* (noble wisdom, ultimate Reality), *ārya-jñāna* (noble knowledge, realization of transcendental wisdom), and *ariya-sangha* (Pa. noble community, the community of disciples). It is used both for enlightened *buddhas* and *arahantas,* as well as for their disciples, and as a title of respect for revered *arahantas,* monks, and holy men and women, in both Jainism and Buddhism.

In the *Dhammapada, ariya* refers to the fully enlightened ones, the *buddhas* or *arahantas:*

> He who imbibes the *Dhamma* abides in happiness with mind at peace;
> The wise man ever delights in the *Dhamma* revealed by the *ariyas.*
>
> *Dhammapada 6:4*

> Make for yourself an island (refuge), strive quickly, be wise.
> When your impurities are purged and you are free from sin,
> you will reach the heavenly land of the *ariyas.*
>
> *Dhammapada 18:2; cf. DPR*

> Mindfulness *(appamāda)* is the way to immortality.
> Mindlessness *(pamāda)* is the way to death.
> Those who are mindful *(appamattā)* do not die.
> The mindless *(pamattā)* are as if already dead.
>
> Fully understanding this,
> the wise, intent on mindfulness *(appamāda),*
> delight in mindfulness *(appamāda),*
> rejoicing in the realm of the *ariyas.*
>
> *Dhammapada 2:1–2*

> Good is the sight of *ariyas:* to be in their company is great happiness.
>
> *Dhammapada 15:10*

Likewise in the *Sutta Nipāta:*

> Those who are devoted to the *Dhamma* made known by the noble ones *(ariyas)* are unsurpassed in speech, thought, and action. They are established in peace, gentleness and concentration, and have reached the essence of learning and wisdom.
>
> *Sutta Nipāta 2:9, Kiṃsīla Sutta, PTSN p.57, KNJI*

See also: **āryakā**, **ārya-pudgala**.

**āryakā**, **āryikā** (S) (masc. *āryaka*) *Lit.* an honourable woman; a noble or respectable woman; in Jainism, a nun of the *Digambara* tradition. An *āryikā* normally receives initiation from a male *muni* or *āchārya* and traditionally joins an order of male mendicants. Nowadays, there are some independent groups of female *āryikās,* with their own *āryikā* leaders, who have permission to initiate their own disciples, not always women.[1]

For a *Digambara* monk *(muni),* the vow of non-possession includes complete nudity. For a woman, the vow is less rigorous, and they wear a white sari for the remainder of their life. But because a woman does not take the vow of non-possession in its fullest form, she is not regarded as a fully fledged monk, and is accorded a lesser status. The vows to which *āryikās* adhere are the same as laywomen *(shrāvikās)* who have reached the first grade of the eleventh stage *(pratimā)* of renunciation. Men and women who have reached this stage are known by the titles *kshullaka* and *kshullikā,* respectively. Nuns of the *Shvetāmbara* tradition are known as *sādhvīs.*

See also: **ārya**, **kshullaka**, **muni**, **sādhu**.

1. See "āryikā," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**ārya-pudgala** (S), **ariya-puggala** (Pa) *Lit.* noble *(ārya)* person *(pudgala);* in *Theravāda* Buddhism, someone who has reached any of the four stages on the supramundane or spiritual path leading to *nibbāna;* also called a *pratipannaka* (S. one who has set out upon a path, Pa. *paṭipannaka*). The four degrees of *ariya-puggala* are further subdivided into those travelling the supramundane or noble path (S. *ārya-marga,* Pa. *ariya-magga*) towards the attainment of each stage, and those who have attained the fruit (S/Pa. *phala*) of that stage.

Buddhism classifies human beings into two broad categories: the *puthujjanas* (ordinary worldly people), those belonging to the multitude, those whose eyes are obscured by the dust of defilement and delusion, seeing only the surface of things; and the *ariyas* or *ariya-puggalas,* the noble ones, the seekers of spirituality, who, through higher states of consciousness, are aware – to a greater or lesser extent – of the supramundane or extra-ordinary Reality that transcends the world of mind and body. *Ariya-puggalas* have developed insight into the three aspects of existence – impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and no-self. They see things as they truly are; they see life as suffering, finding no real happiness in this world, with its deceiving and illusory pleasures.

See also: **arhat**, **srotāpanna**.

**asaṃkhāra-parinibbāyī** (Pa) *Lit.* one who attains enlightenment *(parinibbāyī)* without effort *(asaṃkhāra);* one of the five kinds of *anāgāmīs* (non-returners). See **anāgāmin**.

**ascetic** (Gk. *askētēs*) One who practises self-denial and austerities, abstaining from material comforts and pleasure for the sake of drawing closer to God; in Christianity, a monk of the early Christian church, especially a desert father; from the Greek *askein* (to exercise). The Greek *askētēs* means both monk and ascetic, the two being synonymous in early Christian times.

The fundamentals of the ascetic life are well portrayed by Archimandrite Sophrony in his book, *Monk of Mount Athos,* which concerns the life of his spiritual master, Staretz Silouan (1866–1938). According to the monastery register, the worldly name of the *staretz* was "Simeon Ivanovich Antonov, peasant from the province of Tambov, district of Lebedyan, village of Shovsk".

The essential goal of the ascetic, writes his disciple, is the quest for God within through contemplation:

> The ascetic learns the great mysteries of the spirit through pure mental prayer. . . . He descends into his inmost heart, . . . reaches the profound spiritual, metaphysical core of his being.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.31*

He sees things within himself that are unknown and inexplicable to the majority:

> The ascetic in spiritual contemplation beholds things which for the overwhelming majority of people are a mystery, but afterwards he is faced with the impossibility of communicating this mystery – translated into mortal language, it is construed quite differently by him who hears it. The language of human words and concepts is able only to a very limited extent to convey one man's inner state to another.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.115*

But to reach this point, the ascetic must do battle with body and mind. The *staretz* entered the monastery at the age of thirty, and Archimandrite Sophrony describes his master's early struggles:

> Before Simeon now lay the ascetic's battle against intrusive thoughts or suggestions from without – a battle which is no mere matter of cogitation on some abstract point, but the struggle of mind and heart

> together against influences proceeding from entities invisible to the physical eye. Often the insidious thought comes clothed in fair words, to appear not only good, but wise and even saintly. But by its effect on the heart, we may recognize its origin. Only practice in guarding the mind and heart from every intrusive thought and imagining leads to understanding of the power and subtlety of demoniac insinuations. . . .
>
> From the lives of the saints and the works of the holy ascetics, from conversations with spiritual father and others on the Holy Mountain, the young monk gradually learned to wage the ascetic war. As before, he did not lie down but slept in snatches sitting on a backless stool. He did hard physical labour all day. He practised inner obedience, setting himself to subdue his own will and learn full submission to the will of God. He was frugal in food, restrained in conversation and gesture. For long periods at a time he devoted himself to the Jesus Prayer – a feat so fraught with difficulty as to strain a man to breaking point. Yet, in spite of it all, the light of grace often left him, and hosts of devils surrounded him by night.
>
> These alternations – between a certain measure of grace followed by abandonment of God and the assaults of devils – were not sterile: they kept Simeon's soul alert and vigilant. Unceasing prayer and mental watchfulness, acquired with his characteristic patience and courage, opened new horizons of spiritual knowledge and enriched him with new weapons for the war against the passions. More and more often his mind sought out that vantage point of attention in the heart, whence it could observe the inner world of the soul. By comparing his alternating states and feelings he came to a clearer understanding of what was happening to him, and grew in spiritual knowledge and judgment. He learned how insidious thoughts suggested by the different passions steal upon the soul, just as he learned to understand the workings of grace. He entered upon a life of deliberate inner striving, realizing that the main purpose of such striving is the acquiring of grace. How grace is acquired and preserved, and why it forsakes the soul, became one of the supreme considerations of his life.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA pp.26–27*

Nevertheless, whatever his inner struggles, the *staretz* never showed it outwardly:

> To the outward observer the *staretz* remained an 'ordinary' man to the end of his days. He lived like all good monks – fulfilling the task given him by obedience, sober in all things, observing the monastic rule and hours. . . . He was tranquil and benign to the last. He never lost his temper, nor did any earthly passion mar him inwardly or outwardly.

> Like all really experienced ascetics, he made no show of his inner life, standing before the Father in secret, as the Lord commanded.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.36*

To a modern mind, versed in the language of psychotherapy, the idea that negative thoughts are instigated by the devil and a host of demons may seem bizarre. Everyone 'knows' that thoughts are the outcome of the subconscious mind. Yet the truth is that the nature of the immaterial mind has yet to be understood, and mind explaining mind is circular logic that does not reach the heart of the problem. From a practical viewpoint, it may make little difference what belief system is used to explain the origin of thoughts, whether they are positive or negative. For the monks and ascetics of ancient times, even until the nineteenth century, the origin of distracting thoughts was demons. As the fourth-century monk, Athanasius (295–373) writes:

> I marvel at the guile of the devil, for though he is corruption and mischief itself, he suggests thoughts which appear pure; however, the result is a snare rather than a trial. For, as I said before, in order to distract ascetics from their usual salutary meditation, and appear to overcome them, he stirs up the kind of distracting thoughts that are of no benefit in life, vain questions and gossip which should be put aside.
>
> *Athanasius, Letter to Amoun, MLA p.1*

Evagrios Pontikos (*c.*345–399) categorizes the demons into three main groups:

> There are three chief groups of demons opposing us in the practice of the ascetic life, and after them follows the whole army of the enemy (the devil). These three groups fight in the front line and with impure thoughts seduce our souls into wrongdoing. They are the demons set over the appetites of gluttony, those who suggest to us avaricious thoughts, and those who incite us to seek esteem in the eyes of men. If you long for pure prayer, keep guard over your incensive power; and if you desire self-restraint, control your belly, and do not take your fill even of bread and water. Be vigilant in prayer and avoid all rancour. Let the teachings of the Holy Spirit be always with you; and use the virtues as your hands to knock at the doors of scripture. Then dispassion of heart will arise within you, and during prayer you will see your intellect (*i.e.* spirit) shine like a star.
>
> *Evagrios Pontikos, On Discrimination 23, Philokalia, PCT1 p.52*

Of the many battles fought by the ascetic, one of the most insidious is spiritual pride. As the seventh-century monk John Klimakos observes, all spiritual

triumphs can turn to pride. And a "vainglorious ascetic" who makes a show of his 'spirituality' simply "cheats himself":

> Like the sun which shines on all alike, vainglory beams on every occupation. What I mean is this: I fast, and turn vainglorious. I stop fasting so that I will draw no attention to myself, and I become vainglorious over my prudence. I dress well or badly, and am vainglorious in either case. I talk or I remain silent, and each time I am defeated. No matter how I shed this prickly thing, a spike remains to stand up against me.
>
> A vainglorious man is a believing idolater. Apparently honouring God, he actually is out to please not God but men. To be a showoff is to be vainglorious. The fast of such a man is unrewarded and his prayer futile, since he is practising both to win praise. A vainglorious ascetic doubly cheats himself, wearying his body and getting no reward. Who would not laugh at this vainglorious worker, standing for the psalms and moved by vainglory – sometimes to laughter and sometimes to tears – for all to see?
>
> *John Klimakos, Ladder of Ascent 22, LDAC p.202*

Some ascetics struggle greatly in their battle against pride:

> Informed through long experience that pride separates us from divine love, the ascetic, at every manifestation of pride, pours out the vials of his wrath against himself, as unworthy to be with God, and condemns himself to hell, for the flames to consume the power of his every passion.
>
> Blessed Staretz Silouan observed that many spiritual warriors despair when they approach this state (an essential condition for the refining of the passions), and progress no further. But the courageous and experienced ascetic, who knows God's love for us, in his wisdom contrives to stand on the brink of despair while the flames of hell do their work. At the same time he does not fall victim to despair.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA p.116*

As many spiritual teachers have pointed out, so long as the attention is focused on self, pride and ego remain. Self cannot eliminate self; ego cannot eliminate ego. The solution is love of the Divine, when the self automatically merges into the Divine. The ascetic, however, pursues a path of hardship and self-mortification in his quest for God:

> The hardships of the ascetic life end in the repose of dispassion, while soft ways of living breed shameful passions.
>
> Do not place reliance on your many years of monastic life, and do not fall victim to pride because of the harshness of your ascetic

> struggles, and the way you have endured the wilderness; but keep in mind the saying of the Lord that you are a "useless servant",[1] and have not yet fulfilled the commandment. . . .
>
> Expel from yourself the spirit of talkativeness. For in it lurk the most dreadful passions: lying, loose speech, absurd chatter, buffoonery, obscenity. To put the matter succinctly, "through talkativeness you will not escape sin",[2] whereas a silent man "is a throne of perceptiveness".[3] Moreover, the Lord has said that we shall have to give an account of every idle word.[4] Thus silence is most necessary and profitable.
>
> *St Theodoros, Spiritual Texts 77–79, Philokalia, PCT2 pp.30–31*

See also: **asceticism** (▸3).

1. *Luke* 17:10.
2. *Proverbs* 10:19, *LXX.*
3. *Proverbs* 12:23, *LXX.*
4. *Matthew* 12:36.

**ashaiksha** (S), **asekha** (Pa) *Lit.* non *(a)* learner *(sekha);* one who is no longer a learner, pupil, or disciple; an expert, an adept; one who has gone beyond learning or training, who has completed or perfected his training, who travels the path of no more learning (S. *ashaiksha-mārga,* Pa. *asekha-magga*); one who has reached perfection in moral conduct, mental training and higher wisdom, and has no further need of training; commonly used for an *arahanta* (noble one, enlightened one); one who understands everything as it really is, who has attained the spiritual goal.

Buddhist tradition divides and subdivides human beings into various categories. There are laypeople or householders and those who dwell in a state of homelessness *(anagāriya).* Human beings are also categorized as either worldly people *(puthujjana)* or noble ones *(ariya)* who follow the noble eightfold path of the Buddha. The *ariya* are subdivided into those in need of further learning or instruction *(sekha),* and those no longer needing instruction *(asekha).* A *puthujjana* is also known as *n'eva-sekha-n'asekha* (S. *naiva-shaiksha-nāshaiksha,* neither a learner nor one beyond learning), which can also include Buddhist followers with only a minimal desire for enlightenment.

According to Buddhist thought, sentient beings are bound to *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death, worldly existence) by ten fetters *(saṃyojana).* A *sekha* (a learner, one under instruction) is one who is in the process of overcoming these ten fetters, and has attained one of the seven of the eight stages on the path of enlightenment. He is either on the path towards becoming or

has attained the fruit of being a *sotāpanna* (stream-enterer), a *sakadāgāmī* (once-returner), or an *anāgāmī* (non-returner); or he is on the path towards becoming an *arahanta,* but has not yet attained its fruit. An *asekha* has overcome all the ten fetters and has attained the fruit of the path to becoming an *arahanta,* and has become an *arahanta.*

According to the Pali texts an *asekha* possesses ten attributes:

**1**. Right understanding *(sammā-diṭṭhi).*
**2**. Right thought, right intention *(sammā-sankappa).*
**3**. Right speech *(sammā-vācā).*
**4**. Right action, right work *(sammā-kammanta).*
**5**. Right livelihood *(sammā-ājiva).*
**6**. Right effort *(sammā-vāyāma).*
**7**. Right mindfulness *(sammā-sati).*
**8**. Right concentration *(sammā-samādhi).*
**9**. Right knowledge, right gnosis *(sammā-ñāṇa).*
**10**. Right deliverance *(sammā-vimutti).*[1]

The *Majjhima Nikāya* concludes:

> When a *bhikkhu* (monk) possesses these ten qualities, he is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an unsurpassed field of merit for the world.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 65, Bhaddāli Sutta, PTSM1 pp.446–47, MDBB p.550*

Enumerating Buddhist principles in numbered groups, the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna identifies three paths to enlightenment. Of these, the path of the followers of the Buddha, of the *shrāvakas* ('hearers'), can be further subdivided into three categories:

> There are three kinds of paths to *nirvāṇa:* the path of the *shrāvakas,* the path of the *pratyeka-buddhas* (those who attain enlightenment for themselves alone), and the path of the *buddhas.* The path of the *shrāvakas* is of three kinds: the path of those who practise *(shaiksha-mārga),* the path of those who no longer (need to) practise *(ashaiksha-mārga)* and the path of those who are neither the one nor the other *(naiva-shaiksha-nāshaiksha-mārga).*
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 42:3.2, TVW4 p.1427*

Commenting on a text from the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras,* Nāgārjuna adds that Ānanda, one of the Buddha's closest disciples and companions, was not an *ashaiksha,* was not fully enlightened. Following the vows of the *bodhisattva,* he wished to remain of service to the Buddha and his disciples:

> Although Ānanda could have attained the state of the *arhat,* in order to continue to serve and honour the Buddha, he did not destroy his impurities. Because of these great qualities *(guṇa)* and although he himself was not an *ashaiksha,* he dwelt among the *ashaikshas;* although he had not eliminated desire, he resided among those who had eliminated it *(vītarāga).* This is why, since among the five thousand members of the assembly, he was not really an *arhat,* the text says that (all were *arhats*) except for Ānanda.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 6:11; cf. TVW1 p.197*

See also: **arhat**, **sekha** (▸4).

1. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 65 *(Bhaddāli Sutta),* 78 *(Samaṇamaṇḍikā Sutta), PTSM1* pp.446–47, *PTSM2* p.29, *MDBB* pp.550, 653.

**ashavan** (Av) *Lit.* Truth *(Ashā)* possessing *(van);* righteousness-possessing; one imbued with or sanctified by mystic Truth or righteousness; an associate of Truth; a follower or seeker of the mystic Truth, as opposed to a *dregvant* (possessed by Untruth), a worldly minded person; hence also, a perfect saint, since he is the truthful one, the righteous one or the spiritual one – he whose being is fully saturated with Truth or righteousness. In the latter context, Zarathushtra writes:

> He who comes to the truthful one *(ashavan),*
> the Light shall henceforth be his abode.
> But the followers of Untruth *(dregvants)* are condemned
> to lives of distress, to long ages of darkness,
> and to the realm of darkness,
> led there by their own selves,
> through their own sinful deeds.
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 31:20; cf. DSZ p.241*

In mystic literature, the "realm of darkness" is generally this world, making this verse one of the few in Zarathushtra's *Gāthās* that can be construed as a reference to reincarnation and the law of justice or *karma.*[1] In another verse, Zarathushtra also points to the spiritual way to the divine Truth – through *Vohu Manah* (Good Mind), the Primal Mind or Intelligence of God, or His creative power:

> Who is that Great One, that foremost devotee,
> who will teach me how to come to know You
> as the One most worthy to be loved?

Who is that truthful one *(ashavan),*
radiating holiness from all he does?

Whatever is of You is of the Truth *(Ashā).*
Whatever Life's Creator *(Geush Tashan)* has revealed
has been revealed by Your Truth *(Ashā).*
This all men should strive to reach
through Your Primal Mind *(Vohu Manah).*

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 46:9; cf. DSZ p.601*

Later Zoroastrian liturgical texts make frequent use of the term. In a passage from the *Khorda Avestā, Ahura Mazdā* (God), Zarathushtra, the *fravashis* (guardian angels), the *Ameshā Spentās* (personified qualities of God), *yazatas* (divine beings, next in rank after the *Ameshā Spentās*), and many others are all regarded as *ashavans* – those associated with the divine Truth:

We worship *Ahura Mazdā, ashavan,* the master *(ratu)* of *Ashā.*
We worship Zarathushtra, *ashavan,* the master *(ratu)* of *Ashā.*
We worship the *fravashi* of the *ashavan* Zarathushtra.
We worship the *ashavan Ameshā Spentās.*

We worship the *ashavan* – the good, powerful, holy *fravashis* –
the material and the spiritual.
We worship the most effective of masters,
the most active of *yazatas,*
and the most worthy of the masters *(ratu)* of *Ashā,*
who is best able to reach his goal of satisfaction,
the *ashavan* master of *Ashā!*

*Khorda Avestā, Hāvan Gāh 3–4, KAJD*

See also: **ashavan** (▸4), **fshuyant**, **māthrā**, **ratu**, **saoshyant**, **vāstrya**.

1. See also Zarathushtra, *Yasna* 49:11.

**ashganda** (Md) (pl. *ashgandia*) *Lit.* server, servitor, acolyte, envoy; a functionary in Mandaean religious ceremony with a role somewhat similar to that of a Christian deacon; also, the envoy sent as a saviour to rescue souls from this world; also, an envoy in the realm of the spirits *(ʿuthras):*

Then the great mighty Intelligence *(Mānā)* planned,
and created vast and pure worlds of light. . . .

He made dwellings *(shkinata),* installed *'uthras,*
and appointed *ashgandia* (envoys).
Chief of these *ashgandia* before Him was Adakas,
the 'great Word' is his name, for he is a go-between.
*Mandaean Prayer Book 379, CPM p.293*

See also: **envoy**.

**augur** A Roman religious official who interpreted signs, omens and portents, especially to help in making major political decisions; a soothsayer. See **soothsayer**.

**avadhūt(a)** (S/H), **avadhū** (H), **audhūt**, **avdhūt**, **avdhū** (Pu) *Lit.* shaken off, cast off; one who has cast off all material concerns; a renunciate; a yogi; a class of *sannyāsin* (renunciate) who has renounced all worldly attachments and connections; sometimes described as the sixth, the highest and the most extreme category of *sannyāsin;*[1] from *dhūta* (shaken, agitated) and the prefix *ava* (off, away, down).

To have shaken off the influence of this world is the ideal of the true yogi who is not only a physical renunciate, but mentally renounces all that is worldly. Worldly things are consequently powerless to shake him, because he has no attachment to them:

He alone is an *audhūt* who attains such understanding:
day and night he remains absorbed in deepest *samādhi* (meditation).
*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 877, AGK*

Only the true yogi or renunciate can remain absorbed in such a superconscious state.

*Avadhūtas* have played a significant part in the evolution of Indian mystical traditions, notably *yoga, tantra,* and Buddhism. The term has come to be associated with the 'crazy adept' or *mastānā,* whose spontaneous lifestyle exhibits a disregard for social and behavioural norms. In many instances, *avadhūtas* have gone about naked. Their unpredictable and unorthodox character is intended to shock people into awakening from their lack of awareness of the all-pervading divine presence.

It is generally said that there are four types of *avadhūta:*[2] the *brahma-avadhūta,* who is born as an *avadhūta,* with no concern for anything of the world; the *shaivāvadhūta,* a renunciate who has adopted the life of a *sannyāsin,* often with matted hair *(jaṭā)* and dressed in the manner of Shaivites, but who passes much of his time in meditation and

*samādhi* (deep inner absorption); the *virāvadhūta,* who looks and attires himself like a *sādhu* – wearing saffron robes with a *rudrāksha mālā* (rosary of bones), colouring himself with red sandalwood paste, keeping his hair long, and carrying a wooden staff *(daṇḍa),* an axe *(parashu),* and a small drum *(ḍamrū);* and the *kulāvadhūta,* who have received initiation from the *kaula sampradāya* (a tantric sect), but exhibit no outward sign of their inner estate, living an ordinary and seemingly worldly life, as others do, as a family man or even as a king.[3]

Other texts classify *avadhūtas* in various ways. The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* differentiates two main classes: the *Shaivāvadhūta,* who has received full initiation into tantric practices, and the *Brahmāvadhūta,* who employs the *mantra, "Aum sat-chid-ekam Brahma (Aum,* the one existence-consciousness, *Brahman)"*. Each of these two categories is then further subdivided into those who are still travelling the path, and those who have reached the journey's end, and become pure *paramahaṃsas* (pure swans, pure souls):[4]

> *Avadhūtas* are (also) of two classes, according to whether they are perfect *(pūrṇa)* or imperfect *(apūrṇa).* O beloved, the perfect one is called a *paramahaṃsa;* and the other, or imperfect one, is called a *parivrāṭ* (wanderer).
>
> *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra 14:149; cf. GLMT p.446*

The *Siddha-Siddhānta-Paddhati,* one of the earliest *haṭha yoga* texts, contains many stanzas describing the characteristics of the *avadhūta.* One verse describes his ability to adopt a wide variety of roles, according to his whim or to the demands of the situation, as he perceives it. At one time, he may behave like a king or a worldly person; at another, like an ascetic or naked renunciate.[5] A number of other texts also describe and extol the virtues of the *avadhūta.* He is not bound by social customs:

> The *avadhūta* follows no rules, subsists on food that comes to him – as is the practice of the python – from all classes of people excepting those who are accused or fallen, and is solely devoted to the realization of his Self.[6]
>
> *Nārada-Parivrājaka Upanishad 5:17, SUAR p.80*

His life is passed in deep meditation, bringing liberation to many:

> That ascetic who is ever intent on drinking the nectar of *Brahman (Brahmāmṛita)* produced by the long practice of *samādhi* becomes a *paramahaṃsa,* known as an *avadhūta.* By seeing him, all the world becomes pure. Even an ignorant person intent on serving him becomes liberated. He enables one hundred and one generations of his family to

cross (the ocean of *saṃsāra*); his mother, father, wife and children – all these are liberated.

*Maṇḍala-Brāhmaṇa Upanishad 5:9; cf. TMU pp.192–93, YU p.245*

He is a truly free spirit, focused entirely on the divine Reality:

The *avadhūta* lives alone in an empty hut:
with a pure, even mind, he is always content.
He moves about, naked and free,
aware that all this is only the Self. . . .

A patched rag from the roadside serves as a shawl
for him who has no sense of pride or shame.
Naked, he sits in an empty shack,
immersed in the pure, stainless bliss of the Self.

His attainment is beyond attainment or non-attainment:
his state is beyond that of union or separation;
Continually is he established in the one stainless Reality:
how can the *avadhūta* either speak or not speak?

Free from bondage to the fetters of hope,
free from the yoke of acceptable conduct,
free from everything, he has attained peace.
He is the stainless One, the pure Absolute.

For him, where is the question of being embodied or bodiless?
Where is the question of attachment or non-attachment?
Pure and undivided as the infinite sky,
he is, himself, the Reality in Its natural form.

*Avadhūta Gītā 1:73, 7:1–4; cf. DSAE pp.51–52, 155–56*

The description of the *avadhūta* given in the yogic *Upanishads* follows a more or less standard pattern. The *Avadhūta Upanishad* relates:

Sāṃkṛiti approached the venerable *avadhūta,* Dattatreya, and asked: "Venerable Sir, who is an *avadhūta?* What is his condition? What his characteristic? And what his worldly existence?"

To him the venerable Dattatreya, the most compassionate, replied: "The *avadhūta* is so called because he is immortal *(akshara);* he is the greatest; he has cast off worldly ties *(dhūta-saṃsāra-bandhana);* and he is the indicated meaning of the maxim, 'Thou art That' *etc.*

> "He who rests constantly within himself, after crossing (the barrier of) castes and stages (of life), and thus rises above *varṇas* (castes) and *āshramas* (stages of life), and is in union (with God) is said to be an *avadhūta.*
>
> "His joy is the head; delight is his right wing; great delight his left wing; and bliss (his very self). Thus he assumes a fourfold condition. . . .
>
> "His worldly existence consists in moving about freely, with or without clothes. For him, there is nothing righteous or unrighteous; nothing holy or unholy. . . .
>
> "None of this is extraordinary. . . . He is not tainted like the ignorant. As the sun absorbs all waters, and the fire consumes all things (remaining unaffected by them), even so, the pure *yogī* enjoys all objects, unstained by virtues or sins."
>
> *Avadhūta Upanishad 1–4, 7–9; cf. SUAR pp.1–3*

The *Turīyātīta-Avadhūta Upanishad* provides a similar setting and description, starting with an overview:

> The grandfather of all people (the god *Brahmā*) respectfully approaching his father, *Ādi-Nārāyaṇa* (Lord *Vishṇu*) asked, "What is the path of the *avadhūtas* after the *turīyātīta* (fourth, transcendental) stage, and what is their standing?"
>
> Lord Nārāyaṇa replied to him: "Wise sages consider that one who follows the path *(mārga)* of the *avadhūta* is very rare in this world, and there are very few. If one becomes (an *avadhūta*), he is always pure; he is truly the embodiment of dispassion, the visible form of wisdom, and the personification of (all that is taught in) the *Vedas.* He is a great man, for his mind abides in Me alone. And truly, I too abide in him. In due order, having first been a hut-dwelling ascetic *(kuṭīchaka),* he reaches the stage of a mendicant monk *(bahūdaka);* the mendicant monk attains the stage of a *haṃsa* ascetic; the *haṃsa* ascetic then becomes the highest kind of ascetic *(paramahaṃsa).*"
>
> *Turīyātīta-Avadhūta Upanishad 1; cf. SUAR pp.36–37*

This is followed by a more detailed description of the inner and outer life of an *avadhūta:*

> "By looking within, he realizes the nature of the entire universe, and he renounces all personal possessions, . . . such as his symbolic staff, water pot, waist band, and covering loincloth, along with all the ritualistic duties previously enjoined upon him. He becomes unclad

(*digambara,* sky-clad, clothed by the six directions), abandoning even the acceptance of a discoloured, worn-out bark garment or (deer) skin, and he behaves thereafter as one free from *mantras* (*i.e.* performance of rituals). He gives up shaving, oil bathing, the perpendicular mark of sandal paste on the forehead, and so on.

"He relinquishes all religious and secular duties; he is free of merit and dismerit under all circumstances. He has given up both knowledge and ignorance, and has conquered heat and cold, happiness and misery, honour and dishonour, for he has previously burnt up censure, praise, pride, rivalry, ostentation, haughtiness, desire, hatred, love, anger, covetousness, delusion, gloating joy, intolerance, envy, clinging to life, and so on, together with all latent bodily habits *(vāsanās).*

"Viewing his body as a corpse, as it were, he possesses effortless and unbounded equanimity in gain or loss. He sustains his life like a cow, satisfied with whatever comes without ardently longing for it. He reduces all learning and scholarship to ashes; he is vigilant over his conduct, disowning all sense of superiority or inferiority. He is established in non-duality, which is the highest principle of all, and which comprises all within itself. He cherishes the conviction, 'There is nothing separate from me.' . . . He is untouched by sorrow, unresponsive to worldly happiness.

"He is free of the desire for affection, completely unattached to the auspicious or the inauspicious. With senses stilled, he is unmindful of the superiority of his conduct, and the learning and moral merit *(dharma)* he acquired in previous stages of his life. He has no concern for the conduct befitting his caste or stage of life *(vanaprastha).* Night and day being the same to him, he is dreamless. Always on the move, with only his body to call his own, his water pot as his only watering place, he is ever aware, but wanders alone as though he were a child, a madman, or a ghost.

"Always observing silence and meditating deeply on the Self, he has for his support the supportless *(i.e. Brahman).* Forgetting everything as a result of his absorption in the Self, such a *turīyātīta* sage has attained the state of the *avadhūta.* Completely absorbed in non-duality, he has gone beyond his body and become one with *Aum.* Such an ascetic is an *avadhūta;* he has accomplished his life's purpose."

*Turīyātīta-Avadhūta Upanishad 1–2; cf. SUAR pp.37–39*

See also: **mastānā**, **sannyāsin**.

1. *E.g. Nārada-Parivrājaka Upanishad* 4:22–24, 5:11–22, 7:1–11; *Sannyāsa Upanishad* 2:23–29, 74; *Turīyātīta-Avadhūta Upanishad* 1.

2. Though appearing in a number of places, the primary source of this variously attributed classification has proved elusive.
3. For some of this information, see "Avadhūta," *Wikipedia,* ret. December 2011; Georg Feuerstein, "Holy Madness," *Yoga Journal,* May–June, 1991, pp.68–70, 103–7.
4. *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* 14:140*ff.*
5. *Siddha-Siddhānta-Paddhati* 6:20.
6. *Cf. Sannyāsa Upanishad* 2:29.

**avatār(a)** (S/H), **autār**, **avtār** (Pu) *Lit.* coming down, descent; a human incarnation of a deity; an incarnation of the lord or ruler of an inner region; an incarnation of *Vishṇu,* said to have taken nine incarnations as an *avatāra,* in different *yugas,* with the tenth (Kalki) yet to come. Generally speaking, Hindus understand *avatāras* to be the ten *avatāras (dashāvatāras)* of *Vishṇu.* The *Padma Purāṇa* and *Gītā Govinda* list these ten *avatāras* as the Fish (Matsya), Tortoise (Kūrma), Boar (Varāha), Man-lion (Narasiṃha), Dwarf (Vāmana), Parashurāma, Rāmachandra, Kṛishṇa, Buddha, and Kalki.[1] To many Hindus, Jesus, as well as Buddha and all true saviours, were also *avatāras,* incarnations of God. The term is sometimes used in Buddhism for the incarnation of a *buddha,* specifically as the manifestation of a *buddha*'s *nirmāṇa-kāya* (emanation body, human body) in this material world.

There is no unanimity between lists of the ten *avatāras.* The *Mahābhārata* and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* differ to some extent, both omitting the Buddha. In his place, the *Mahābhārata* includes the Swan (Haṃsa),[2] or in some texts Balarāma (Kṛishṇa's older brother);[3] the *Vāyu Purāṇa* drops the Fish and the Tortoise as well, and includes the sages Dattatreya and Veda-Vyāsa, and the king Māndhātṛi, who assisted the gods in their battles against the *asuras* (demons).[4] The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* contains three lists – one with twenty-two names, another with twenty-three, and the third with sixteen.[5] All three lists include Buddha as well as Ṛishabha, the first Jain *Tīrthankara.*

The *avatāras* of *Vishṇu* that are widely worshipped by the Hindus are Narasiṃha, Vāmana, Rāmachandra, and Kṛishṇa. The ten commonly listed *avatāras* are:

**1**. The Matsya, or Fish, iconographically depicted either as a huge fish or as a human figure with a fish's body from the waist down. In this *avatāra, Vishṇu* descends in the form of a fish to save the pious king Manu Satyavrata, also called Manu Vaivasvata (the son of Vivasvat, the sun god), who with the seven *ṛishis* (sages) and their wives take refuge in an ark to escape the deluge, which then destroys the earth. Manu Satyavrata was the seventh Manu, during whose reign the entire earth became corrupt and was swept by a flood. All living beings perished except Manu and the seven *ṛishis.*

The story is one of a number of deluge myths, common to many traditions, of which there are various versions in Hindu literature. In the *Mahābhārata, Matsya* is identified with *Prajāpati* (later associated with *Brahmā*), the creator deity of the *Ṛig* and *Atharva Vedas.*[6] Some versions of the legend portray Manu as the first man.[7] In later versions, the *Vedas* are hidden by a demon and Manu is taken captive. Matsya then slays the demon, rescuing Manu and recovering the scriptures.[8]

According to another version, one day while the seventh Manu is engaged in his devotions on the banks of a river, he scoops up a handful of water, in which he finds a very small fish *(matsya).* The fish begs him not to throw it back into the river, where no tiny fish is safe. "Take care of me, and I will take care of you," the little fish promises. Manu grants its wish, and places it in a bowl of water; but the fish quickly outgrows the bowl and various larger vessels. He therefore places it in a pond, then a lake, and finally in the ocean. The fish warns him of an impending flood and directs him to gather together a pair of all living creatures and the seeds of every plant in a boat, in which he is also to accommodate the seven great *ṛishis.* When the flood comes, he is to remain in the boat. When a great fish appears, he is to attach the boat by a rope to a horn, which the fish has grown on its head, and the fish will then tow the boat to safety. When the flood happens as prophesied by the fish, Manu follows its instructions and is brought to safety.[9]

**2**. The Kūrma, or Tortoise. In this *avatāra, Vishṇu* descends in the form of a tortoise, for the purpose of restoring to man some of the comforts lost during the flood. To this end, he stations himself at the bottom of the ocean, and allows the great mountain Mandara to be placed upon his back. The mountain serves as a firm axis around which the gods and demons – with the serpent Vāsuki twisted around the mountain as a rope – churn the waters for the recovery of the *amṛita* or nectar, and fourteen other sacred things.[10]

**3**. The Varāha, or Boar. In this *avatāra, Vishṇu* descends in the form of a boar to rescue the earth from the power of the demon, Hiraṇyāksha (golden-eyed), who has seized the earth and carried it with him into the depths of the ocean. *Vishṇu* assumes the form of an enormous boar and, diving into the abyss, slays the monster in a contest lasting a thousand years, following which he lifts the earth from the bottom of the ocean on his tusk.[11]

**4**. The Narasiṃha, or Man-lion. In the shape of a creature half-man, half-lion, *Vishṇu* delivers the earth from the tyranny of an insolent demon Hiraṇyakashipu ('golden cushion'), the twin brother of Hiraṇyāksha. According to the story, Hiraṇyakashipu has obtained a boon from *Brahmā* that he cannot be slain either inside or outside a house, by day or by night, by man or by beast. Thus ensured of his safety, he harasses gods and men.

Hiraṇyakashipu is unable to tolerate even the name *Nārāyaṇa,* the epithet by which *Vishṇu* is generally worshipped. The demon's son Prahlāda ('full of joy'), however, is a devotee of *Vishṇu,* and is in the habit of repeating, *"Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa"*. Hiraṇyakashipu asks Prahlāda to desist, but he does not. This arouses the ire of his father, who tries to distract him with various temptations. When these attempts fail, Prahlāda is persecuted in various ways, but he still continues to repeat, *"Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa"*. Prahlāda then tells his father that *Nārāyaṇa* is all-pervading and present in all things. Enraged at his son's insolence, Hiraṇyakashipu, points to a pillar on the threshold of the house and asks cynically whether or not *Nārāyaṇa* is present in it. When Prahlāda replies in the affirmative, the demon kicks the pillar contemptuously. The time of day is the dusk, and at this point, *Nārāyaṇa* emerges from the pillar in the form of half man and half lion (Narasiṃha) and kills Hiraṇyakashipu. The demon is thus killed neither by man or nor by beast, but by a man-beast; neither inside nor outside a house, but on the threshold; and neither by day or by night, but at dusk. *Vishṇu* in the form of Narasiṃha is worshipped, and is commonly depicted in sculpture.

**5**. Vāmana, or Dwarf, the first *avatāra* to appear in human form, albeit of diminutive stature. The incarnation of *Vishṇu* as Vāmana is said to have taken place in *tretāyuga* – the second age *(yuga)* according to the Hindu mythological cycle of ages – the four preceding incarnations having happened during the first or *satyayuga.*

Vāmana's purpose is to trick the benign *asura* (demon) Emperor Mahābali, grandson of Prahlāda and a pious and just ruler, out of the sovereignty of the three worlds, which he had earned as the result of his good deeds. The gods being jealous of Mahābali's achievements, implore *Vishṇu* to restore heaven to their ruler *Indra.* Assuming the form of a dwarf, *Vishṇu* appears before the benevolent king, requesting, as a boon, as much land as he can cover in three steps. Thinking that a dwarf cannot cover much ground in three steps, he grants the boon. But as soon as the boon is granted, Vāmana expands himself to an immense size until he fills the world, and in two steps covers earth and heaven. Realizing who he was dealing with, the emperor humbly places his head before *Vishṇu,* for the dwarf's third step. For his humility and benevolence, *Vishṇu* then grants him immortality, and leaves the netherworld in Mahābali's domain.

According to the traditional myth, the emperor is permitted to come to earth once a year to see his people. Mahābali has been revered since earliest times in the South Indian state of Kerala, where *Vishṇu*'s incarnation as Vāmana and the homecoming of Emperor Mahābali are celebrated in the festival of Onam. The reign of Mahābali is regarded as India's golden age.

**6–8**. Parashurāma, Rāmachandra and Kṛishṇa, who are characters appearing in the Hindu epics. In some instances, Balarāma, the elder brother and close companion of Kṛishṇa, is regarded as the eighth *avatāra* of *Vishṇu.*

**9**. The Buddha. In this *avatāra, Vishṇu* is understood to have descended in the form of a sage for the purpose of reforming the religion of the *brāhmaṇs,* and especially to reclaim them from their practice of animal sacrifice. Many Hindus do not consider the Buddha to have been an incarnation of their favourite deity.

**10**. Kalki, or White Horse, an incarnation that is yet to come. According to prophecy, *Vishṇu* – mounted on a white horse, with scimitar drawn, and blazing like a comet – will end this present age, *viz.* the fourth or *kaliyuga,* by destroying the world and then renovating creation with an age of purity, a new *satyayuga.*

Outside the world of mythology, an *avatāra* is generally understood to be a saint or mystic who has descended to the world in order to help human beings. Not all mystics come to this world for the same purpose. Those who teach the path of the mystic Sound *(Shabd)* or creative power come to take souls out of the world and back to God. They are the saviours, redeemers or perfect masters, who are incarnations of the supreme Lord. But although *avatāra* is not usually applied to such masters, the nineteenth-century mystic Swami Shiv Dayal Singh has used the term in this context:

> *Rādhā Swāmī* (*i.e.* God) will give salvation to the *jīvas* (embodied souls):
> *Rādhā Swāmī* has assumed the incarnation *(autār)* of a saint.
>
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 3:5.50, SBP p.32*

> Out of compassion, the true master becomes an *autār.*
> He tries in many ways to make us understand
> the path of the Sound *(Shabd).*
>
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 22:2.8–9, SBP p.188*

Some mystics incarnate in order to teach people how to live in this world. In the Hindu triad of *Brahmā, Vishṇu* and *Shiva* – personifications of the three *guṇas* – *Vishṇu* is the sustainer of the world, helping to keep it a tolerable place in which to live. Thus, in the *Bhagavad Gītā,* Kṛishṇa, as an incarnation of *Vishṇu,* speaks of incarnating himself to redress the balance of good and evil:

> Whenever righteousness *(dharma)* declines, O Bhārata,
> and unrighteousness *(adharma)* is in the ascendant –
> Then I manifest myself for the protection of good,
> and for the destruction of evil.
> For establishment of righteousness *(dharma),*
> I am born from age to age.

> O Arjuna, he who understands the essential nature
> of my incarnation and my actions
> is not reborn on leaving the body, but comes to Me.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 4:7–9*

Understood in general terms, *avatāras* are incarnations of divine power. Hence, ʿInāyat Khān portrays *avatāras* as conscious reflections of divinity on earth:

> If planets, the reflections of the sun, have power upon the external affairs of humanity, how much greater must be the power of the God-conscious, the reflections of divine light, of which the sun is merely a shadow! These are the *awtāds* (A. pillars), whom the Hindus call *avatāras,* who are not in power, as earthly kings are, only for the time of their life on earth, but remain in power even after they have passed from this earthly plane. The knower therefore sees in the masters of humanity, not only the deliverers of the divine message, but also the spiritual sovereigns, controllers of the universe during their cycles.... The sages of India, Kṛishṇa and Rāma and Mahādeva, who were known as the *avatāras* or incarnations of divine personalities, what was it? – The divine personality reflected in them. The numberless great *avatāras* of whom we read in the traditions of the Hindus have been manifestations of that reflection.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.30, SMIK4 p.284*

ʿInāyat Khān also notes the difference between the Indian and the Middle Eastern ways of depicting the mystical nature of the relationship between the saints and God:

> There are two different conceptions of the prophetic soul. One is that of the Hindus, who called the prophetic souls *avatāras,* which means incarnations of God.... It was easier for the people of India to grasp the idea of a prophet being a God incarnate than to accept him as another human being. The long line of prophets of Beni Israel were not called incarnations.... Abraham was called *Khalīl Allāh,* the Friend of God; Moses was distinguished as *Kalām Allāh* (Word of God), the one who communicates with God; Jesus was called *Rūḥ Allāh,* the Spirit of God; Muḥammad was called *Rasūl Allāh,* the Messenger of God.... The people of India were ready to accept the divine in man; but in Arabia and Palestine on the contrary, even the prophetic claim aroused such opposition against the prophets that their lives were in danger, and their mission became most difficult for them to perform.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 pp.147–48*

1. *Padma Purāṇa* 7:6.71.23–29, 9:6.229.40–44, *PPD7* pp.2573, *PPD9* p.3166; Jayadeva, *Gītā Govinda, Hymn to Vishṇu, ISSG* pp.5–6.
2. *Mahābhārata* 12:340, *MV10.*
3. *Mahābhārata* 12:339.77, *MRS5* p.5350.
4. *Vāyu Purāṇa* 2:36.71–104, *VPT2* pp.784–87.
5. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1:3.6–22, 2:7.1*ff.,* 11:4.3*ff.*
6. *Mahābhārata* 3:187.52, *MRS2* pp.1480–81.
7. *Ṛig Veda* 1:114.2, 2:33.13, 10:86.23.
8. *Matsya Purāṇa;* also mentioned in *Varāha Purāṇa* 133:20.257.
9. *Matsya Purāṇa, MPSA* p.30; *Classical Hindu Mythology, CHMP* pp.77–74.
10. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 8:7.16–17, *SB10* pp.255–56; *Vishṇu Purāṇa* 1:9.
11. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1:3.18–19, *BPT1* pp.320–28; *Kūrma Purāṇa* 1:6.1–25, *KPT1* pp.52–55; *Padma Purāṇa* 9:6.237.1–29, *PPD9* pp.3195–98; *Varāha Purāṇa* 1:114.1–13, *VPI1* pp.260–61; *Vishṇu Purāṇa* 1:4, *VPW* pp.26–28.

**awbāsh** (A/P) (sg. *wabash*) *Lit.* troublemakers; metaphorically, in the reversed imagery of some Sufis, including the loosely knit *Qalandarīyah* order, a mystic; one who has drunk the wine (of divine love) in the "tavern of ruin or the ruins *(kharābāt)*" – in the spiritual sanctuary within. Speaking of the beloved and his "cup" of divine love, Rūmī writes:

> As soon as I saw his cup,
> I became the chief of the troublemakers *(awbāsh)* –
> As soon as I saw his hat, I lost my heart and turban.
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 1392:14735, KSD3 p.180, in SPL p.316*

ʿIrāqī counsels a life of divine love in contrast to one of pious asceticism:

> How long will you remain in the cloister worshipping yourself?
> Go, become a wine-worshipper, like a troublemaker *(awbāsh)!* . . .
> I, too renounced asceticism:
> now night and day I am like a troublemaker *(awbāsh)!*
> *ʿIrāqī, Kullīyāt 2808, 1278, KHI pp.215, 133; cf. in SSE6 p.125*

**awliyā**ʾ (A/P) (sg. *walī*) *Lit.* friends; helpers, supporters, benefactors, protectors; in Islam, friends of God *(awliyāʾ Allāh),* holy men, saints, mystics, spiritual masters. See **walī**.

**awtād** (A/P) (sg. *watad*) *Lit.* stakes, tent pegs; pillars, supports; in Islam, four among the hierarchy of saints *(awliyāʾ)* presided over by the *quṭb,* who are responsible for the equilibrium of the world, and reporting to the *quṭb:*

> It is well known among *ṣūfīs* that every night the *awtād* must go around the whole world, and if there should be any place on which their eyes (*chashm, i.e.* special glance) have not fallen, next day some imperfection will appear at that place; and they must then inform the *quṭb,* in order that he may fix his attention on the weak spot, and that by his blessing the imperfection may be removed.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:7, KMM p.288; cf. KM p.228*

Tahānawī explains that the *awtād* are responsible for the spiritual welfare of the world:

> In the wayfarer's view, there are four supports *(awtād)* among the friends of God *(awliyā')* who are assigned to the four corners of the world.... According to the *Kashf al-Lughāt,* they maintain the entire universe, and the well-being of the world stems from their blessing *(barakat).*
>
> The *Mir'āt al-Asrār* ('Mirror of Mysteries') states, "...The four corners of the universe prosper through the existence of these four supports *(awtād)* in the same way that the earth is kept stable by the mountains."
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT4 pp.291–92; cf. in SSE6 p.11*

The twentieth-century Indian Sufi, ʿInāyat Khān, says that the *awtād* are the equivalent of the Hindu *avatārs:*

> If planets, the reflections of the sun, have power upon the external affairs of humanity, how much greater must be the power of the God-conscious, the reflections of the divine light, of which the sun is merely a shadow! These are the *awtād,* whom the Hindus call *avatārs,* who are not in power, as the earthly kings are, only for the time of their life on earth, but remain in power even after they have passed from this earthly plane. The knower *(muḥaqqiq)* therefore sees in the masters of humanity, not only the deliverers of the divine message, but also the spiritual sovereigns, controllers of the universe during their cycles.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.30*

When the *quṭb* dies, his place is filled by one of the *awtād,* who are likewise said to be chosen from among the *abdāl* (substitutes). Although the identities of the members of the saintly hierarchy were not revealed, there was naturally considerable speculation among Sufis as to who they were. Hence, Hujwīrī writes of Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Masrūq:

> He was one of the great men of Khurāsān, and the saints of God are unanimously agreed that he was one of the *Awtād.* He associated

> with the *quṭb,* who is the pivot of the universe. On being asked to say who the *quṭb* was, he did not declare his name but hinted that Junayd was the personage. He had done service to the forty *(abdāl)* who possess the rank of fixity *(ṣāḥib-tamkīn),* and received instruction from them.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XI:48, KMM p.185, KM pp.146–47*

See also: **abdāl**, **quṭb**.

**ʿayyār** (A/P) (pl. A. *ʿayyārūn,* P. *ʿayyārān*) *Lit.* vagabond, outlaw, rogue; an evolved mystic who hides his spiritual attainment under the guise of outlandish behaviour, often incurring considerable criticism, so that only true seekers of spirituality remain with him; similar to the *rind* (profligate, a devotee who is free from restraint). The *Mir'āt-i ʿUshshāq* depicts the *ʿayyār* as "one who has insight into others' hearts".[1] According to Anṣārī:

> Once an *ʿayyār* met a *ṣūfī* and said, "The difference between us and you is that whatever we say we do, while you do whatever enters your hearts."
>
> *Anṣārī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah 356, TSAA p.423, in SSE6 p.119*

Hujwīrī describes Dhū al-Nūn Miṣrī, a ninth-century Egyptian Sufi, as one of those who disguised their holiness:

> He was the son of a Nubian, and his name was Thawbān. He is one of the best of this sect, and one of the most eminent of their *ʿayyārān,* for he trod the path of affliction and travelled on the road of blame *(malāmat).* All the people of Egypt were lost in doubt as to his true state, and did not believe in him until he was dead. On the night of his decease, seventy persons dreamed that they saw the Apostle, who said: "I have come to meet Dhū al-Nūn, the friend of God *(dūst-i khudā).*" And after his death the following words were found inscribed on his forehead: "This is the beloved of God, who died in love of God, slain by God." At his funeral, the birds of the air gathered above his bier, and wove their wings together so as to shadow it. On seeing this, all the Egyptians felt remorse and repented of the injustice which they had done to him. He has many fine and admirable sayings on the verities of mystical knowledge.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XI:9, KMM p.125, KM p.100*

The *ʿayyārān* was also the name of a group whose outward code of conduct was similar to the Sufis, and who eventually became the *futuwwat* (qualities

of mature men), the 'companions of chivalry'. The *'ayyārān* helped the poor and needy, and honoured their promises. They lived according to a high moral and ethical code, basing their life on three principles: honesty in word and deed, practising what one preaches, and patience and tolerance for all.[2]

See also: **rind**.

1. *Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq,* in *TAT* p.217, in *SSE6* p.119.
2. Muḥammad Muʿīn, *Farhang-i Fārsī,* in *DJH* p.65, in *SSE1* p.211 (n.1).

**baʿalei ha-yediʿah** (He) *Lit.* masters of *(baʿalei)* the knowledge *(ha-yediʿah);* those with knowledge of inner divine secrets; gnostics, kabbalists; also called *ha-yodeʿim* (those who know), a terminology that began with Moses Naḥmanides (1194–1270) in Gerona, Spain.

**bābā** (P/H/Pu) *Lit.* grandfather, father; a term of filial respect; also a term of respect given to a holy man or an older man; in India, often used with the honorific suffix *'jī',* as in *'bābā jī'.* Many Indian saints and mystics have been known by this title, either informally by their disciples, or as an epithet after their time, such as the Indian Sufi Bābā Farīd.

The term has even been used for Adam, the archetypal man of the Bible:

> The Lord showed some favour to Bābā Ādam,
> and he obtained paradise for a long time.
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1161, MMS*

*Bābā* is also an affectionate address for a friend, Guru Nānak addresses his readers as, "O friend *(bābā)*" when counselling them to write a record of their deeds that will bear close scrutiny.[1] Likewise, he says, "O friend *(bābā),*" when explaining that the world is enmeshed in a vast net, and liberation is only possible by "contemplating the true Name through the *guru*'s grace".[2]

1. Guru Nānak, *Ādi Granth* 16, *AGK.*
2. Guru Nānak, *Ādi Granth* 1009, *MMS.*

**bādah-firūsh** (P) *Lit.* wine *(bādah)* seller *(firūsh),* wine dealer; in Sufi symbolism, a master; one who is capable of bestowing the grace of divine intoxication; also called *may-firūsh, may* being another word for wine.

Rūmī counsels exchanging the wine of this world for the "wine of the spirit", obtainable from a "wineseller" who can replace the limited consciousness of this world with the vast consciousness of the spiritual world:

> Greetings, you who drank wine *(bādah)* this morning!
> To your health! Greetings! Come forward!
> Let me whisper some secret words in your ear:
> the wine *(may)* of the spirit *(rūḥ)* is rare,
> so go, taste some of that as well!
> One drop will take away all your cleverness and awareness.
> When you escape from this awareness
> through constant drinking and intoxication,
> the wineseller's *(bādah-firūsh)* generosity
> will give you a hundred other awarenesses.
> When you enter into the mysteries,
> the spirit will give you to drink,
> your shouting and uproar will throw the spheres into tumult.
> Take this other wine, not that red or amber one.
> This one will make you master of the inner Reality *(Maʿnī),*
> and deliver you from outer forms!
>
> *Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz 404:4273–77, KSD1 p.236; cf. in SPL p.312*

Ḥāfiẓ, a lover of wine metaphors, says that personal experience of the intoxication of divine love is of far greater value than pious practices and rituals:

> The wineseller *(bādah-firūsh)* can take from Ḥāfiẓ
> his patched garment and prayer mat,
> if the hand of that moonlike cupbearer dispenses wine in return.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.116, DIH p.210; cf. DHWC (180:7) p.348*

The radiance of the master within is such that the devotee completely submits himself at the inner door:

> If the young magian wineseller *(bādah-firūsh)* reveals such radiance,
> I will make my eyelashes a sweeper at the door of the winehouse.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.5, DIH p.35; cf. DHWC (7:3) p.36*

For the mystic wineseller reveals the mysteries he has learnt from God:

> The mystery of God that the mystic *(ʿārif)* traveller told no one:
> I am in wonder where that wineseller *(bādah-firūsh)* heard it.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.57, DIH p.129; cf. DHWC (215:6) p.396*

See also: **khammār**, **may-firūsh**, **pīr**, **sāqī**.

**bāgōng** (C) *Lit.* eight *(bā)* honourable gentlemen *(gōng);* the eight worthies; a group of eight scholarly mystic adepts who are traditionally believed to have visited King Liú Ān of Huáinán (*c.*179–122 BCE) during the Western Hàn Dynasty.

Of the thousands of guests in Liú Ān's court, the *bāgōng* were said to have been the most gifted. According to the stories related in the *Shénxiān zhuàn* ('Tales of the Immortals'), written by Gě Hóng (283–343) some four to five centuries later, each possessed various mystical and magical powers, and the king, although at first suspicious, became so impressed with their wisdom and powers that he invited them to remain in Huáinán as his guests. Asking the *bāgōng* to work at the academy he had founded, he commissioned them to write about spirituality and the mysteries of the *Dào.*

Although historical records show some variations, in his preface to the *Huáinánzǐ* ('Book of the Masters of Huáinán'),[1] scholar and commentator Gāo Yòu (*fl.*205–212) of the Eastern Hàn Dynasty lists them as Sū Fēi, Lǐ Shàng, Zǔo Wú, Tián Youú, Leí Beì, Máo Beì, Wǔ Beì, and Jìn Chāng.

According to this preface, King Liú Ān and the *bāgōng,* along with other scholars, discussed spirituality and the mysteries of the *Dào,* and together compiled the *Huáinánzǐ,* a work that has survived to present times. The *bāgōng* were widely believed by scholars of the *Táng, Míng* and *Qīng* dynasty to have been the authors of the *Huáinánzǐ.*

The king is said to have been a prolific writer, and the *Huáinánzǐ* comprises a selected collection of essays presented as a result of discussions between him and his guests, in particular the *bāgōng.* Containing over 800 quotations from Chinese classical texts, the book blends Daoist, Confucian, and Chinese Legalist concepts in its discussion of topics that include mythology, metaphysics, philosophy, music, history, science, nature, astronomy, geography, and politics.

Following Liú Ān's death, legends proliferated concerning both him and the *bāgōng.* Later Daoist books such as the *Shénxiān zhuàn* and the *Língyì lù* ('Book of Occult Events') deified the *bāgōng* as immortals. The *Shénxiān zhuàn* also relates that the *bāgōng* gave a potent elixir of immortality to the king. Legend has it that, after ingesting the elixir, Liú Ān and the *bāgōng* departed as transcendents *(xiān).* Ascending to heaven from the peak of the mountain that now bears the name Bāgōng Shān, they left their footprints and the hoof prints of their horses imprinted in the mountain rock, which are said to be visible to this day. Moreover, according to the *Shénxiān zhuàn:*

> People living at the time report that, when Liú Ān and the eight worthies *(bāgōng)* at last took their departure from this earth, the vessel containing the dregs of the elixir was left behind in the courtyard. The contents were duly finished by the dogs and poultry of the establishment with the result that they too sailed up to heaven. Thus, roosters were heard crowing in the sky, and the barking of dogs resounded among the clouds.
>
> *Gě Hóng, Shénxiān zhuàn 4:15a, TEAK p.296*

The *bāgōng* together with Liú Ān were also believed to have accidentally invented *dòufu* (tofu) during their alchemical experiments.

See also: **shéntōng** (7.3).

1. See *Zhōngguó zǐxué míngzhù jíchéng* 85:3, *ZZMJ*.

**bakkāʾūn, al-** (A/P) (sg. *bakkāʾ*) *Lit.* the weepers; those who weep constantly; a name given to a group of early Muslim ascetics, forerunners of the Sufis, who inculcated a strong sense of sin, and undertook many austere penances. Laughter was condemned and, as with some early Christian ascetics, outward weeping was regarded as an expression of the correct attitude of penitence and humility. The practice is commended in both the *Qurʾān*[1] and the *ḥadīth*.[2]

Among those who commended weeping were Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī and many others, including Abū al-Dardāʾ, who wrote *Kitāb al-Riqqah wa al-Bukāʾ* ('The Book of Weakness and Weeping'). A few bore the epithet *al-Bakkāʾ,* such as Yaḥyā al-Bakkāʾ ('John the Weeper') of Baṣrah. Some of the *bakkāʾūn* wrote treatises explaining the reasons for weeping, which included the fear of what would happen after death, remorse for sins and weaknesses or over the wasted years gone by, doubt as to the verdict on the Day of Judgment, and the impossibility of bringing about one's own salvation. Some included weeping for joy and gratitude, weeping over God's kindness and indulgence, and His protection on the Day of Judgment.

The ability to weep was regarded as an indication of special grace and not something experienced by every seeker. Conversely, the inability to weep was seen as a sign of abandonment by God. The Prophet is said to have begged God for "two raining eyes that weep a flood of tears".[3]

Some ascetics, however, had reservations concerning the practice. For one thing, it could lighten the burden of inner grief. Some weepers therefore developed a technique of holding back the tears in order to retain the grief within themselves. Then again, weeping was an outward action and, as such, could be simulated for show. Many later Sufis believed that to be overpowered by such feelings and give in to an outward display of weeping was a sign of weakness.[4] But in whatever way it is interpreted, the emotion arises from the soul's innate yearning for the Divine. As such, it is likely that it will be deepened by inner containment, and be dissipated by outward expression.

See also: **contrition** (▸4), **mourning** (▸4), **penitence** (▸4), **remorse** (▸4).

1. *Qurʾān* 17:109, 19:58.
2. *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 1:8.465, 1:11.650, 680, 3:37.494, *HSB*.

3. *Ḥadīth, Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ* 2:280, 296*ff.,* in "Bakkāʾ," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI1* p.960.
4. "Bakkāʾ," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, EI1* pp.959–60.

**bālā** (P) *Lit.* height; in Sufi symbolism, the spiritual stature of the divine beloved within; the image also conveys the sense of humility required of the devotee before the inner vision of the beloved can be experienced:

> Until the sunlight of her countenance *(rukh)*
> humbles you like a shadow,
> you will never be able to follow
> that lofty stature, that lofty height *(bālā).*
> *Maghribī, Dīvān 76:732 p.131; cf. in SSE1 p.15*

The divine beloved is also known as the "idol". Ḥāfiẓ begs the beloved to reveal his spiritual form so that the little self will be annihilated in "rapture", and that the soul will ascend beyond the body and "the world":

> O idol of graceful movement,
> arise, and reveal your height *(bālā),*
> so that, O Ḥāfiẓ, I too may rise up
> beyond the desire of life and of the world.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.203, DIH p.330; cf. DHWC (439:7) p.732*

**baladeva**, **balabhadra** (S) *Lit.* powerful *(bala)* god *(deva);* powerful and blessed *(bhadra)* person; one of the five classes of *shalākā-purusha* (great personalities, heroes) in Jain mythology. See **shalākā-purusha**.

**bandah-ʾi Khudā**, **bandah-ʾi Ilāh** (P) *Lit.* servant *(bandah)* of God *(Khudā, Allāh);* equivalent to the Arabic *ʿabd Allāh;* a term used either for a devotee or a perfect saint.

Rūmī generally uses the term for the perfect saint. In one such passage, Muḥammad advises ʿAlī, famed for his great courage and resourcefulness, that on the path to God, even he should seek help from a "servant of God":

> O ʿAlī, above all devotional acts in the Way,
> choose the shadow of the servant of God *(bandah-ʾi Ilāh)….*
> Go, take refuge in the shadow of the sage *(ʿāqil),*
> that you may escape from the enemy that opposes you in secret.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2965, 2967; cf. MJR2 p.162*

Talking of the perfect saint who is in contact with the mystic Voice *(Āvāz)* of God, he says that when the *bandah-'i Khudā* speaks, it is God Himself talking:

> O you who are rotten with death beneath the skin,
> return from nonexistence
> at the Voice *(Āvāz)* of the Friend *(Dūst)!*
> Absolutely, indeed, that Voice *(Āvāz)* is from the King (God),
> though it be from the larynx of God's servant *('abd Allāh).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1935–36; cf. MJR2 p.105*

Since the *bandah-'i Khudā* is invested with all the qualities of God, whatever he does or touches becomes purified:

> You came into the tavern, O most exalted *shaykh,*
> and in consequence of your coming,
> all the wines have turned to honey.
> You have purified the wine from filth:
> purify our souls also from defilement!
> Even if the whole world were filled to the brim with blood,
> how could the servant of God *(bandah-'i Khudā)* drink anything
> but what is hallowed?
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3421–23; cf. MJR2 p.399*

Rūmī also says that many people feel that they have arrived at divinity after experiencing a little inner light, whereas in fact they have only seen a faint reflection of the true light of the Divine, given to them as an encouragement ("a loan"). To make further progress, they need to come into contact with a true "servant of God":

> Many a one intoxicated with fire and seeking fire
> deems himself absolute Light.
> He is lost unless a servant of God *(bandah-'i Khudā),*
> or the pull of God Himself, leads him to the Way,
> making him turn over a new leaf –
> So that he may know that the fiery phantom,
> which he mistook for light in the Path, is but a loan.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī V:1366–68; cf. MJR6 pp.83–84*

Such a saint, he says, lives only through God:

> The shadow of God is that servant of God *(bandah-'i Khudā)*
> who is dead to this world and living through God.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:423; cf. MJR2 p.26*

See also: ʿ**abd Allāh**, **bandah** (▸4).

**banjārā** (H), **vanjārā**, **vaṇjārā** (Pu) *Lit.* merchant, trader, nomad; one who loads his goods onto oxen and goes out to sell them; metaphorically, either a human being who is given the capital of a human birth to utilize for the purpose of spiritual advantage, but may trade it for the worthless and the transient, or a master whose trading commodity is the treasure of divine grace, which he gives to his initiates in exchange for the submission of their egos.

Ravidās describes himself as trader in the divine Name or creative power:

> I am a trader *(banjārā)* of divine goods: I deal in the state of *sahaj.*
> I am laden with the treasures of God's Name,
> but the worldly are laden with poison. . . .
> I have shaken off all entanglements of the world.
> This world is like the fast-fading colour of safflower.
> But the colour of my Lord is fast,
> like that of (the herb) madder *(majīṭh),* says Ravidās the cobbler.
>
> *Ravidās, Vāṇī, Rāg Kedaro 96:2–4, SGRV p.108*

Human beings have also been depicted by mystics as merchants who come to this world laden with *karma* to transact the business of spirituality and gain spiritual wealth. A few do utilize this opportunity to fulfil their purpose, but the majority lose even that with which they came – the opportunity of being human and the chance of returning to God:

> Those who are outwardly pure and also pure within,
> through the *guru,* perform good deeds.
> Not even an iota of falsehood touches them:
> their hopes are absorbed in the Truth.
> Those who earn the jewel of this human life
> are the most excellent of merchants *(vaṇjārā).*
> Says Nānak, those whose minds are pure,
> abide with the *guru* forever.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 919, AGK*

> Rise, O moon, and spread your light across the heavens;
> The stars remember you in silent prayers,
> their hearts glimmering with hope.
> Now, like beggars,
> we roam the alleyways of earthly life,
> when once in our own homeland,
> we were ruby merchants *(vaṇjārā).*

Oh, may no one ever have to leave his own home,
for one is not worth a piece of straw in this alien land!
*Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 70, SBU p.383; cf. SBE pp.276–77*

See also: **vanjārā** (▸4).

**bāṭinīyah** (A/P) *Lit.* those of the internal *(bāṭin);* those of the inner meaning; those who see the inner reality of everything, believing only that to be true or real; esotericists, gnostics, as opposed to the *ẓāhirīyān* (externalists, followers of external form); used especially of the *Ismāʻīlīyah,* a group regarded as heretical by traditional Islam, although at one time they possessed significant political and military power. Their doctrine included the belief that every religious dogma has both an inner and an outer meaning. Their method of interpretation, known as *ta'wīl,* was therefore to bring out the inner meaning of religious observances and belief. *Ta'wīl* (taking back) means going back to the original meaning of things. The *Bāṭinīyah* also maintained that since God is fair to everybody, He must therefore provide a living Authoritative Teacher *(Imām)* to teach this inner meaning and to guide His devotees aright.

See also: **bāṭin** (▸3).

**bāxiān** (C) *Lit.* eight *(bā)* immortals *(xiān);* a group comprising both mythical and historical figures, who became the legendary eight immortals of Chinese mythology; revered throughout China, and particularly by Daoists; not to be confused with the *bāxiān* of Huáinán, better known as the *bāgōng* (eight worthies).

The *bāxiān* are popular in secular Chinese culture both as a group and individually. They may be found in literature (from folklore to novels), in drama, in paintings, and in diverse artistic renderings on such items as woodblocks, scrolls, hand-held fans, and porcelain objects. The eight immortals were Zhōnglí Quán (*aka.* Hàn Zhōnglí, the leader of the group), Lǚ Dòngbīn (*aka.* Ancestor Lǚ, the group's informal leader), Cáo Guójiù (Royal Uncle Cáo), Tiěguǎi Lǐ (Iron-Crutch Lǐ), Lán Cǎihé (whose gender has never been established) Hán Xiāngzi (Philosopher Xiāng), Zhāng Guǒlǎo (Elder Zhāng Guǒ), Hé Xiāngū (Immortal Woman Hé, the only female deity in this group).

Zhāng Guǒlǎo, Zhōnglí Quán, and Lǚ Dòngbīn were real historical figures whose reputations have been augmented by legend; the remainder exist only in legend.

Although descriptions of the *bāxiān* probably originated in the *Táng* dynasty (618–907), the group's membership did not crystallize until the

*Míng* dynasty (1368–1644). They were said to have their base on Pénglái Mountain, one of five mythical and elusive islands in the Bóhǎi Sea beyond China's east coast.

The *bāxiān* also symbolize eight different conditions of life: youth, old age, poverty, wealth, nobility, the populace, the feminine, and the masculine.

See also: **bāgōng**, **shéntōng** (7.3), **xiān**.

**Beghards** A Christian brotherhood, whose founding in thirteenth-century Belgium, was inspired by the Beguines. They never became as prominent as the Beguines, and were finally extinguished during the French Revolution.

See also: **Beguines**.

**beginner** In mysticism, one who has just set out upon the spiritual path; a novice; often part of a common tripartite division of spiritual aspirants into beginners, wayfarers or travellers, and adepts or the perfected. Among the Christian mystics of Spain, for instance, these three were known as the *principiantes* (beginners), the *aprovechantes* or *aprovechados* (progressives), and the *perfectos* (adepts, proficient, perfect).

Many Christian mystics have offered advice concerning the deportment of beginners. John of the Cross, for example, describes the beginner's tendency to put on a show, desiring to appear more spiritual than he really is:

> Sometimes they are anxious that others shall realize how spiritual and devout they are, to which end they occasionally give outward evidence thereof in movements, sighs and other ceremonies; and at times they are apt to fall into certain ecstasies, in public rather than in secret, wherein the devil aids them, and they are pleased that this should be noticed, and are often eager that it should be noticed more.
>
> *John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul 2:3, CWJC1 p.333*

See also: **adept**.

**Beguines** A Christian sisterhood founded in late twelfth-century Liège (eastern Belgium), spreading to Paris, Germany and elsewhere, whose members led semi-religious lives, devoting themselves to prayer and good deeds without taking religious vows and while remaining a part of the community; also called the holy women (L. *mulieres sanctae* or *mulieres religiosae*); of uncertain etymology, but possibly after Lambert le Bègue, the twelfth-century priest

who founded the sisterhood, the name becoming established during the 1230s, seemingly as a pejorative term.

The movement, characteristic of the somewhat unorthodox lay piety of the times, began among upper class urban women, and spread to the middle class. As well as catering for the spiritual needs of its followers, it was also a response to the difficulties occasioned by an excess of single women in urban areas at the time of its founding, a situation caused to some extent by the loss of male life in the Crusades. In Germany, the Beguines lived together in communities of sixty or seventy women; in the Low Countries, they lived in a colony of individual dwellings within a walled enclosure. For the most part, they supported themselves by care of the sick, handicrafts, and so on, also spending time in devotion and contemplation. They promised to remain chaste for as long as they were members of the Beguine community, but were free to leave and get married.

Many of the communities had close ties with Franciscan and Dominican friars. Some were associated with the well-known Rhineland Dominicans and mystics Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, Johann Tauler, and others. The Flemish mystic Jan van Ruysbroek was well enough acquainted with them to make them his starting point in his *Book of the Twelve Beguines.* The work begins by relating a fictional conversation between twelve Beguines on the love of Jesus, which becomes the subject matter for the remainder of the book.

Among the works of literature produced by the Beguines themselves is *Miroir des simples âmes* ('The Mirror of Simple Souls'), written by Marguerite Porete, early in the fourteenth century. It is regarded as possibly the finest religious text in Old French. Also notable are the mid-thirteenth-century *Flowing Light of the Godhead* of Mechthild von Magdeburg, and the works of the Flemish Beguine Hadewijch, whose view of the soul's relationship to God as being like that of the lover and beloved was a significant influence on Jan van Ruysbroek.

Because of the mystical inclinations of some individuals and communities, they became the focus of suspicions of heresy. Severe measures were taken against them, and they were subjected to prejudice and restrictions. In 1311, the Council of Vienne ordered the dissolution of the communities. The attempted suppression was not entirely successful, however, and policy vacillated until the fifteenth century, after which they were officially tolerated. By this time, the movement had declined, with many members joining established religious orders. Nonetheless, a few communities functioning as charitable organizations still exist today, mostly in Belgium.

A brotherhood paralleling the Beguines, founded in the thirteenth century, was known as the Beghards. They never became as prominent, and were finally extinguished during the French Revolution.[1]

1. Some material drawn from "Beguines," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2001).

**běiqīzhēn** (C) the seven *(qī)* perfect ones *(zhēn)* of the north *(běi);* the seven realized ones of the north. See **quánzhēn qīzǐ**.

**beloved**, **beloved one** One held dear; mystically, the divine Beloved, implying God or the master; a term used throughout mystic literature, where the Beloved is generally the Lord or the inner spiritual form of a master, and the soul is the lover; appears in a variety of other contexts, as when the divine Beloved addresses the lover as his beloved, or disciples are addressed as beloved ones, the beloved of God, and so on. In Christianity, the Beloved is usually the inner Christ or the Word *(Logos);* in Hebrew, the terms used are *yedid* (beloved, friend) and *dod* (beloved); in Arabic and Persian, terms used include *maḥbūb, maʿshūq* (A/P), *dilbar* and *dūst* (P. friend); in Hindi, the usual terms are *pyārā* (H) and *piārā* (Pu).

See **beloved** (7.2).

**běnshī** (C), **honshi** (J) *Lit.* original *(běn, hon)* teacher or master *(shī, shi);* used either in reference to the historical Buddha or to the founder of a particular Buddhist school; a *Zen* or *Chán* Buddhist master.

See also: **rōshi**.

**Bhagavat** (S), **Bhagavān** (S/H), **Bhagavant** (S/Pa/H), **Bhagvān**, **Bhagvant** (H), **Bhagwān**, **Bhagwant** (H/Pu) *Lit.* possessing fortune *(bhaga);* fortunate, prosperous; glorious, illustrious, divine, holy; adorable, venerable; one who possesses splendour, greatness, fame, or glory; one who is omnipotent; a revered person; one endowed with the six supernatural qualities of infinite power *(vīrya),* superhuman might *(vibhūti),* splendour *(yashas),* abundance *(shriyā),* wisdom *(jñāna),* and dispassion *(vairāgya);* widely used as an honorific, meaning Lord, Master, Blessed One, Venerable Sir, Revered Lord, *etc.;* in Hinduism, a title of veneration applied to God, deities such as *Vishṇu* and *Shiva,* demigods, holy men, and even idols; in Buddhism, also an epithet of the Buddha, *buddhas,* and *bodhisattvas,* as also of sacred texts.

According to Jain philosophy, the universe is eternal and uncreated, not created by a deity, supreme or otherwise. Every soul is potentially God, and when it attains perfection and liberation it becomes God. It is for this reason that Jains worship the *Tīrthankaras* (ascended masters), for they are regarded as God. Some Indian terms for God, such as *Īshvara, Bhagavān,* and *Paramātman* are therefore used in Jainism for perfected souls, and used synonymously with *siddha* (perfect ones).

The inner being or soul of all beings is a part of the Divine, and in the eyes of Indian *sants,* there is no difference between a true saint and the divine Essence, since such a saint has realized God within himself:

> There is absolutely no difference in any way
> between the saint *(sant)* and God *(Bhagvant),*
> This does the dull-witted Tulsīdās declare.
>
> *Tulsīdās, Vinayapatrikā 57, VPTD p.85*

The term is also used as an epithet. Being without the vision of God for just a single moment, says Guru Arjun, is descent into darkness. Therefore he exclaims on behalf of the devotee:

> When will I meet You, O my beloved Lord *(Bhagwant)?*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 96–97, AGK*

The Buddha, too, is commonly addressed as the "Blessed One *(Bhagavant)*":

> Homage to him, the Blessed One *(Bhagavant),* the worthy *(arahanta),*
> the fully enlightened one *(sammā-sambuddha)!*
>
> *Buddhist Invocation*

See also: **Bhagavat** (2.1).

**bhāṇaka** (S/Pa) *Lit.* reciter, declarer, preacher; in particular, one who recites the scriptures from memory; a transmitter of the oral tradition by which scriptures in ancient times were passed on from generation to generation; part of the means by which canonical texts were preserved and transmitted before written texts came into vogue; in Buddhism, a reciter and memorizer, especially of the *Sutta Piṭaka* (part of the Pali canon); hence, *dīgha-bhāṇaka, majjhima-bhāṇaka,* and so on, as reciters and memorizers of the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas.* The *bhāṇakas* were also preachers, and were often associated with Buddhist holy places, such as stupas (S. *stūpa,* Pa. *thūpa,* which housed the ashes or other relics of past holy men) and other pilgrimage places. Teachers or preachers of the Buddhist Way *(Dharma)* were sometimes known as *dharma-bhāṇakas.*

It is probably the existence of different lineages of *bhāṇakas* that has, at least in part, given rise to differences between the various recensions of the *Nikāyas,* as well as the occurrence of the same *suttas* or portions of them in different *Nikāyas.* According to Buddhist tradition, the First Council (*c.*400 BCE), believed to have been held within a few decades of the Buddha's death, collected his discourses, dialogues and excerpts therefrom, and arranged

them in the five well-known *Nikāyas.* The common scholarly consensus, however, is that although the *Nikāyas* were composed as if the Buddha was actually speaking, the First Council collected only short passages and verses containing significant aspects of the Buddha's teaching, and that these were later expanded into the five *Nikāyas.*

Many, perhaps the majority, of oral transmitters would have been unable to read and write. Modern observations of the oral tradition in different religions has revealed that when the children of oral transmitters learn to read and write, they lose the ability to retain the scriptures in memory. It seems to be a characteristic of brain-mind function, analogous to the loss of the ability to do rapid mental arithmetic among those who habitually use an electronic calculator.[1]

In the *Lotus Sūtra,* in a section of uninhibited self-promotion, the *dharma-bhāṇaka* who preaches the *Lotus Sūtra* is made the subject of an extensive eulogy.[2] "If any good man or good woman shall accept and keep this *Scripture of the Dharma Blossom* whether reading it, reciting it, interpreting it, or copying it", he will be the recipient of great merit, and will attain a multitude of virtues of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind, thus purifying these six faculties and enhancing them to an extraordinary degree. He will also have the vision of all the heavens and hells, "up to the pinnacle of Existence". He will come to know everything about all living beings: "He shall thoroughly see and thoroughly know the causes and conditions, the fruits and retributions, of the beings' deeds and places of birth." With a purified hearing faculty, he or she will hear, throughout the cosmos,

> whatever sounds there may be, inner or outer, in the thousand-millionfold world. Though he may not yet have acquired a divine ear (C. *tiānĕr,* S. *divya-shrotra*), with the pure and ordinary ears received at birth from his father and mother, he shall hear and understand everything.
>
> *Lotus Sūtra 19, T9 262:48a6, LBFD pp.265–66*

Likewise, the other human faculties of any "good man or good woman," who "accepts and keeps this scripture, whether reading it, reciting it, interpreting it, or copying it" will also be augmented to an extraordinary degree. Among the various enhancements to their exceptionally purified mind, it is asserted:

> Because of the purity of their mental faculties, upon hearing no more than a single verse or single phrase (of this *sūtra*), he will master incalculable and boundless principles; and after having understood these principles, he will be able to expound a single phrase or a single verse for as much as a month, or four months, or even for a year; and the

> *dharmas* (doctrines) that he preaches will conform to the true import of that principle, and will never be contrary to reality.
>
> *Lotus Sūtra 19, T9 262:50a20–23; cf. LBFD p.276*

1. William Dalrymple, *Nine Lives, NLSI* p.95.
2. *Lotus Sūtra* 19, *T9* 262:47c3–49c21, *LBFD* pp.264–76.

**bhaṭṭāraka** (S) *Lit.* venerable, learned or worshipful one; a title used for deities, as well as men, especially Buddhist teachers, a class of Shaivite monks, and *Digambara* Jain leaders; a title of uncertain history; also known among Jains as *dharmaguru* (leader of religion).

In times past, the title was used for learned Jain monks of both the *Shvetāmbara* and *Digambara* traditions. Nowadays, the title is given to the spiritual and administrative head of a group of *Bīsapanthī Digambara* monks *(munis)* at a particular monastery *(maṭha).* Such a *bhaṭṭāraka* wears an orange robe, is permitted to own property, and lives at the monastery, carrying out his duties as head of the institution. He is also permitted to use mechanized transport, and may travel in India and abroad in order to further the spread of Jainism through education and publications, to meet with Jains in widespread places, and generally to represent the Jain community and its interests. As well as his administrative duties concerning the welfare and smooth running of the monastery and taking care of its manuscript libraries, the *bhaṭṭāraka* presides over various rituals and ceremonies, including births, deaths, and marriages. He consecrates temples and images, oversees the taking of vows, trains students, acts as a part-time physician, and is involved in the dissemination of Jain teachings.

In medieval times, the *bhaṭṭārakas* would represent the Jain community at meetings with Hindu and Muslim rulers and officials. An inscription (1363 CE) says that the Delhi *bhaṭṭāraka* wore a loincloth, and it is likely that *bhaṭṭārakas* first took to wearing clothes during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. A text dating from the sixteenth century says that the *bhaṭṭāraka* instructed his disciples to wear clothes in public in order to avoid Muslim persecution. The origins of the custom may also owe something to the fact that it would have been more comfortable for non-Jains to have had administrative dealings with someone who was clothed, rather than naked. In fact, the organization of the *Digambara* tradition around the *bhaṭṭārakas* is probably responsible for its survival in the face of opposition from the Hindu and Muslim traditions.

Subsequently, with the passage of time and the growing power of the *bhaṭṭārakas,* the institution became increasingly worldly and corrupt, leading to the late-seventeenth-century breakaway *Terāpanthī* movement. With further decline, by the nineteenth century the majority of *bhaṭṭāraka* seats of power

had lost their significance.[1] A modern *bhaṭṭāraka* is no longer the head of a mendicant order, his duties being confined to his own local monastery, and he no longer accepts disciples. Thirty-six separate seats of authority existed in the medieval period, but nowadays only ten survive, in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Prior to the twentieth century, they also flourished in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi.

See also: **Digambara**.

1. See "Bīsapanthīs," *Overview of World Religions, OWR;* "bhaṭṭāraka", *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**bhedī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* one possessed of secrets, a holder of secrets; esoterically, one who has knowledge of Reality; a mystic adept, one who knows all inner secrets; hence, a mystic or master, as in:

> When the knower of secrets *(bhedī)*
> was accepted as a companion,
> he made known the Reality.
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Gurudev kā Ang 60, KSS p.5*

And:

> I am suffering from the pangs of separation
> and am spending sleepless nights.
> I would like to meet a doctor
> who knows the secrets *(bhedī)* of the different realms.
> *Mīrābāī, Shabdāvalī, Shabd 41:4–5, MBS p.17*

Sometimes, the expression appears as *Dhun bhedī* – one who knows the secret of the Sound, an adept of the Sound:

> Through meeting a *guru* who is an adept of the Sound *(Dhun bhedī),*
> the soul, with the help of the Sound *(Dhun),* is able to merge in the Lord.
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 10:1.6, SBP p.95*

See also: **bhed** (▸4).

**bhikshu** (S/H), **bhikkhu** (Pa), **bǐqiū** (C), **bōzu**, **biku** (J) (fem. S. *bhikshuṇī,* Pa. *bhikkhuṇī,* C. *bǐqiūní*) *Lit.* a beggar, a mendicant; a monk, a mendicant monk; one who has voluntarily renounced the world for spiritual reasons and has

given up all possessions, relying on others for his basic necessities; a Hindu in the fourth and last stage *(āshrama)* of his religious life, according to the stages *(āshramas)* of life as described by the sage Manu; a Buddhist mendicant monk, a fully ordained member of the Buddhist *sangha* (community), which consists of *bhikshus, bhikshuṇīs, upāsakas* (laymen), and *upāsikās* (laywomen). In Burma, a fully ordained monk is known as a *phongyi,* in Korea – a *pigu,* and in Tibet – a *lama.* In Thailand, the prefix *phra* or *tahn* (venerable) is commonly used in addressing younger monks, and *phra thera* (venerable elder) is used for monks of at least ten years' standing.

Originally, *bhikkhu* meant a beggar, and in the time of the Buddha, according to the traditional history, ordination was freely bestowed on those who wished to relinquish family life, adopt homelessness, take up the begging bowl, and generally live the life prescribed by the Buddha. *Bhikkhus* were allowed only minimal possessions – a begging bowl, a razor, a needle, a staff, and a toothpick, though there are variations among the extant descriptions of permitted possessions. Sometimes the staff and toothpick are replaced with a water strainer. Sustenance was to be acquired only by begging, and no place of permanent residence was permitted. A monk's style of begging was to stand silently at the door, waiting for alms, living on what was spontaneously given to him by well-wishers. Monks led a wandering life, except during the three or four months of the rainy season, when they remained at one place. It is traditionally believed that this restriction was instituted because walking about at that time would cause too much damage to animal and plant life, a constraint also practised by the Jain mendicant community. During this period, permission to leave the monastery was granted only under exceptional circumstances, such as visiting the sick.

With the passage of time, the rules were eased. The requirement for *bhikkhus* to beg for their food was relaxed, and residential monasteries with their associated way of life came into existence. In fact, later monastic rules specifically exclude the need for begging. These rules are outlined in the *Vinaya Piṭaka,* the full rules governing conduct and moral code being laid out in the *pātimokkha* (S. *prātikmoksha*), also known as the *Pātimokkha Sutta,* which is contained in the first division, the *Sutta Vibhanga,* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka.* The number of rules varies between various Buddhist schools. For *bhikkhus,* there are between 218 and 263 rules, and between 279 to 380 for *bhikkhuṇīs.* These rules are believed to be derived from those that were recited at the time of the first Buddhist councils.

The rules concern themselves with the behaviour of monks and nuns regarding contact with members of the opposite sex, sexual intercourse, food, clothing, dwelling places, furniture, etiquette and social behaviour, procedures for settling disputes, and so on. The *pātimokkha* also contains penalties to be imposed for breaking the rules. Such penalties ranged from life expulsion for the four unpardonable offences of sexual intercourse, stealing, murder,

and wrongly claiming to possess supernatural powers; through temporary exclusion and probation; to penance, and confession. Other rules include standards of behaviour that are easily broken, but which should nevertheless be borne in mind for the sake of one's spiritual development. The rules are arranged in eight sections according to the decreasing severity of penalty. As well as the *pātimokkha,* the *Sutta Vibhanga* also contains an old commentary explaining the rules, and a later commentary with additional information.

Monks in a particular area come together twice a month for the *uposatha* (S. *poshadha*) ceremony, at which the *pātimokkha* is recited. In modern times, monks of the earlier *Theravāda* tradition neither work nor are they permitted to marry. Those of the later *Mahāyāna* tradition, however, may work, while those in certain Tibetan, Japanese and Korean schools are also allowed to marry. Nowadays, some *Mahāyāna* monks even earn large salaries and live luxurious lifestyles.

Buddhist monasteries are supported by donations from the local lay Buddhist community. In some Southeast Asian *Theravāda* communities, it is required or recommended that a layperson should spend some time during the rainy season as a temporary monk or nun. Ordination as a monk or nun is voluntary, and not necessarily a lifelong commitment. The vows taken by a *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhuṇī* are entirely voluntary and non-binding, in the sense that a novice, a monk or a nun is free to discard the robe at any time, and return to everyday life. There is considerable regional variation in ordination practices, but in general the prospective monk is first admitted as a novice (S. *shrāmaṇera*), and assigned an *āchārya* (Pa. *ācariya*) and an *upādhyāya* (Pa. *upajjhāya*). The *āchārya* teaches the *Dharma* while the *upādhyāya* teaches monastic rules and discipline.

The ordination of a novice is known as *pravrajya* (going forth), at which time he or she repeats the *trisharaṇa* (three refuges) formula and undertakes to follow the ten precepts *(dasha-shīla).* At full ordination *(upasaṃpadā),* a novice becomes a full member of the *sangha* (community), and undertakes to follow all the rules of the *Prātimoksha.* In the *Mahāyāna* tradition, there is sometimes a third ordination in which the monk takes the *bodhisattva* vow to work for the liberation of all sentient beings, and not to enter full *nirvāṇa* until all have received enlightenment. A *bhikshuṇī* is a fully ordained nun, but orders of partly ordained nuns exist in several parts of the Buddhist world.

Because of the karmic implications of begging, which presumes that everything received must be paid for at some future time, some have questioned whether the Buddha would really have taught his followers to renounce the world and beg for their sustenance; but this needs to be understood in the context of the Buddha's times. Ascetic renunciation of the world had existed since the Vedic period. In the quest for divine Truth, some seekers turned away from the world, and went forth as wandering mendicants. Of the four *āshramas* of Indian life, mendicancy was an accepted rule in the first *(brahmacharya)*

and last *(sannyāsa)* stages. The renunciate's life was to be governed by the ideals of purity and poverty. He had to shave his head, wear ochre robes, and beg for his food. These conditions were intended as means to inculcate the spirit of humility. The ideal is mentioned in the *Upanishads:*

> Knowing the *Ātman* (the divine Self), *brāhmaṇs* – having overcome the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for (heavenly) worlds – live the life of mendicants *(bhikshu-charyā).*
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:5.1*

The right of such people to sever themselves from the duties of life was recognized by at least the eighth century BCE, and it seems likely that this tradition was continued by the Buddha:

> From these *brāhmaṇs* who, knowing the *Ātman,* renounce all that is earthly, and become beggars, the historical development progresses in a regular line up to Buddha, who leaves kith and kin, and goods and chattels, to seek deliverance, wandering homeless in the yellow garb of a monk. The appearance of the doctrine of the eternal One, and the origin of monastic life in India are simultaneous.
>
> *Hermann Oldenberg, Buddha, BLDO p.32*

Traditional Buddhist history records that the Buddha not only continued the tradition, but he also organized and systematized it. Buddhist *bhikkhus* took the vow to remain poor and to spread the Buddha's teaching. They were governed by an elaborate code of conduct. A community, the *sangha,* was established, with lay members as well as monks. According to the *Majjhima Nikāya,* the Buddha maintained that the laity as well as monks were also his disciples and could attain *nibbāna* (S. *nirvāṇa*):

> There are not only one hundred or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more men lay followers – my disciples – clothed in white, leading lives of celibacy who, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, will reappear spontaneously (in the pure abodes), and there attain final *nibbāna* without ever returning from that world.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 73, Mahāvacchagotta Sutta, PTSM1 pp.490–91, MDBB pp.596–97*

And in the ensuing verses, the same is said of women. In another *sutta,* he repeats:

> There are not only one hundred . . . or five hundred, but far more householders who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body have gone to heaven.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 71, Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta, PTSM1 p.483, MDBB p.589*

Yet in the same *sutta,* he also adds, somewhat paradoxically:

> There is no householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 71, Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta, PTSM1 p.483, MDBB p.588*

But sooner or later, he says elsewhere, when a householder has heard of the Way, the *Dhamma,* and an inclination towards it has started to grow in him, he will begin to feel the irksomeness of the householder's life, and a desire for the homeless life of an itinerant monk will begin to grow in him:

> Here, *bhikkhus,* a *tathāgata* appears in the world, accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed. He expounds the nature of this world with its gods, its *māras,* and its *brahmās,* this generation with its recluses and *brāhmaṇs,* its princes and its people, which he himself has realized by direct knowledge. He teaches the *Dhamma,* good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and he reveals a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure.
>
> A householder or householder's son, or one born in some other clan, hears that *Dhamma.* On hearing the *Dhamma,* he acquires faith in the *tathāgata.* Possessing that faith, he considers thus: "Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from home life into homelessness." On a later occasion, abandoning a small or large fortune, abandoning a small or large circle of relatives, he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on a yellow robe, and goes forth from home life into homelessness.
>
> Having thus gone forth and possessing the *bhikkhus'* training and way of life, abandoning the killing of living beings, he abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, gentle and kindly, he dwells compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, expecting only what is given, by not stealing, he abides in purity. Abandoning incelibacy, he observes celibacy, living apart, abstaining from the vulgar practice of sexual intercourse. . . .
>
> He becomes content with robes to protect his body and with alms food to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes he sets out taking only these with him. Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too, the *bhikkhu* becomes content with robes to protect his body and with alms food to maintain his stomach;

> wherever he goes he sets out taking only these with him. Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a bliss that is blameless.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 51, Kandaraka Sutta, PTSM1 pp.344–46; cf. MDBB pp.448–50*

He thereupon proceeds to perform his meditative exercises, which culminate in the state of extinction called *nibbāna:*

> When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: "It is liberated." He understands: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done; there is no more coming to any state of being."
>
> This, *bhikkhus,* is called the kind of person who does not torment himself or pursue the practice of torturing himself, and who does not torment others or pursue the practice of torturing others – the one who, since he torments neither himself nor others, is here and now hungerless, extinguished, and cooled, and abides experiencing bliss, having himself become holy.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 51, Kandaraka Sutta, PTSM1 348–49, MDBB p.453*

The journey to enlightenment, however, is long and arduous, and many Buddhist texts concern themselves with the behaviour – inner and outer – of *bhikhus* and *bhikkhuṇīs.* The *Dīgha Nikāya* says that the *bhikkhu* is compassionate, causing no injury to other beings; he controls his senses, maintains a state of mindfulness, and is content with little:

> And how . . . is a *bhikkhu* perfected in morality? When a *bhikkhu* abandons the killing of living things, refrains from the destruction of life, lays aside the cudgel and the sword – ashamed of violence and full of mercy – then he dwells compassionate and kind to all living beings. . . .
>
> And how . . . is a *bhikkhu* a guardian of the doors of his senses? – When . . . he sees a visible object with his eye, he is entranced neither by its general nor its detailed characteristics. Because evil states like greed and misery, would overwhelm him if he left his faculty of sight unguarded, so he sets himself to guarding it. He keeps watch upon his faculty of sight, and he attains mastery over it. So, in like manner, when he hears a sound with his ear, . . . or smells an odour with his nose, . . . or tastes a flavour with his tongue, . . . or feels a touch with his body, . . . or when he thinks a thought in his mind, he is entranced neither by its general nor its detailed characteristics. He sets himself to restrain his mental faculties, . . . and he experiences,

within himself, the unsullied bliss that arises from such guarding of the senses. This is how . . . a *bhikkhu* becomes a guardian to the doors of his senses.

And how . . . is a *bhikkhu* established in mindfulness and clear awareness? – When a *bhikkhu* acts with clear awareness in going forth or coming back. When in looking ahead or looking back, in bending and stretching, in wearing his outer and inner robe and carrying his bowl, in eating and drinking, in chewing and swallowing, in obeying the calls of nature, in walking, standing, sitting and lying down, in sleeping and waking, in speaking and silence, he acts with clear awareness. This is how a *bhikkhu* is established in mindfulness and clear awareness.

And how . . . is a *bhikkhu* contented – When a *bhikkhu* is satisfied with a robe to protect his body, with sufficient food to satisfy his stomach, and having accepted sufficient, goes on his way. Just as a bird with wings flies hither and thither, burdened by nothing but its wings, so is he satisfied. This is how a *bhikkhu* is contented.

Then, master of this excellent morality, gifted with this excellent restraint of the senses, endowed with this excellent mindfulness and clear awareness, filled with this excellent contentment, he chooses some lonely spot – at the foot of a forest tree, on a hillside, in a mountain glen, in a rocky cave, in a charnel ground, or on a heap of straw in the open air. And returning there after his alms round, he seats himself, when his meal is done, cross-legged, holding his body erect, and concentrates on keeping himself established in mindfulness.

Abandoning worldly desires, he dwells with a mind free from worldly desires, his mind purified of them. Abandoning the desire to cause injury, he dwells with a mind free from ill will and hatred, purified of malevolence. Abandoning sloth and torpor, perceiving light, mindful and clearly aware, his mind is purified of sloth and torpor. Abandoning worry and flurry, . . . and with a mind inwardly serene, his heart is purified of worry and flurry. Abandoning doubt, he dwells as one who has passed beyond perplexity, without uncertainty as to what things are good, his mind purified of doubt.

*Dīgha Nikāya 2, Sāmaññaphala Sutta, PTSD1 pp.63, 70–71;*
*cf. DBRD pp.79–82, TBLD pp.99–101*

If, having imbibed these excellent human qualities, the *bhikkhu* then sits in meditation *(jhāna),* he experiences states of great joy and bliss, as he passes through its various stages:

Then . . . the *bhikkhu,* with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, enters into and abides

> in the second *jhāna,* which is without thinking and pondering, born of concentration, filled with delight and joy. And with this delight and joy born of concentration, he so suffuses his body that no part remains untouched.
>
> It is as if there were a deep pool, with water welling up into it from a spring beneath, and with no inlet from the east or west, from the north or south, where the rain god, from time to time sends down moderate showers of rain upon it. Yet the current of cool waters rising up from that spring would pervade, fill, permeate, and suffuse the pool with cool waters; and there would be no part or portion of the pool unsuffused therewith – so with this delight and joy born of concentration, he so suffuses his body that no part remains untouched. This . . . is an immediate fruit of the life of a recluse, visible in this world, and more excellent and sweeter than the former.
>
> Then the *bhikkhu,* with the fading of delight, becomes imperturbable, and mindful and clearly aware, and he experiences in himself that joy of which the *arahantas* say: "Happy is he who dwells with equanimity and mindfulness," and so he enters into and abides in the third *jhāna.* And with this joy devoid of delight, he so suffuses his body that no part remains untouched.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 2, Sāmaññaphala Sutta, PTSD1 pp.74–75;*
> *cf. DBRD pp.85–86, TBLD p.103*

The Chinese Buddhist teacher Master Hsuan Hua (1918–1995) speaks of the comportment or demeanour of *bhikshus* and *bhikshuṇīs,* relating them to the 250 precepts:

> The three thousand awesome demeanours of monks *(bhikshus)* and nuns *(bhikshuṇīs)* are derived from the four deportments: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. It is said:
>
> Walk like the wind, stand like a pine;
> Sit like a bell, and lie like a bow.
>
> Walking like the wind does not mean imitating a tornado, nor even the kind of half jog that many people use to get from one place to another. The wind which should serve as a model for walking is the gentle zephyr, which does not even ripple the surface of a still pond.
>
> To stand like a pine is to stand up straight, not slumped over as if totally devoid of energy. The head should not hang as if looking only at the ground; the gaze should be regulated and should not dart furtively back and forth like that of a thief.

To sit like a bell is to be erect and solid yet quite natural and spontaneous. In lying down, the legs should be drawn up slightly like a bow.

When one maintains the two hundred and fifty precepts in each of these four deportments, he has the one thousand awesome demeanours which, when multiplied by the past, present and future, yield three thousand.

*Master Hsuan Hua, on Sūtra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva 1, SVEB*

Although the life of a mendicant monk was recommended by the Buddha, it is clear that he did not consider adoption of the outer life to be sufficient. His understanding of renunciation included renunciation of desire and the development of love and compassion for all sentient beings. To the Buddha, true renunciation was the eradication of all negative tendencies. It meant quietude, stillness, and the elimination of all egotism. The body was to be accepted without torturing it or being attached to it. A true *bhikkhu* therefore embraced all the inner aspects of a spiritual life – seeking purity, self-control and, ultimately, enlightenment:

A man does not become a *bhikkhu* simply by begging.
He who embraces the whole *Dhamma* is a *bhikkhu,*
not he who embraces only a part.
He who is above good and evil, and is celibate,
who lives in the world with wisdom –
He is truly a *bhikkhu.*

*Dhammapada 19:11–12*

A *bhikkhu* is also controlled in all things, enjoys following the *Dhamma,* is at peace in the world and at ease following the spiritual path:

Him they call a *bhikkhu*
whose hand is controlled,
whose feet are controlled,
whose speech is controlled,
who is controlled in everything,
who knows inward delight,
who is recollected,
who is content in solitude.

That *bhikkhu* who controls his tongue,
who speaks wisely without conceit,
who sheds light upon the meaning of the *Dhamma* –
His word is sweet.

He whose pleasance is in the *Dhamma,*
who delights in the *Dhamma,*
who meditates on the *Dhamma,*
who always remembers the *Dhamma* –
That *bhikkhu* never falls away from the true *Dhamma.*...

That *bhikkhu* is said to have peace
who is calm in body, calm in speech,
calm in mind, who is well balanced,
and has rejected the lures of the world....

He can truly be called a *bhikkhu*
who has no thought of 'I' and 'mine'
towards mind and body;
And who is not grieved
at that which he does not have.

That *bhikkhu* who lives with lovingkindness,
comfortable with the teachings of the Buddha –
He will reach the peaceful, blessed state,
where conditioned things are stilled.

*Dhammapada 25:3–5, 19, 8–9*

Such a disciple, concludes the Buddha, is a light in the darkness:

That *bhikkhu* who, though still young,
applies himself to the teachings of the Buddha,
lights up the world like the moon emerging from behind a cloud.

*Dhammapada 25:23; cf. DPN*

**birakh**, **rukh** (Pu) *Lit.* tree; a metaphor used in the *Ādi Granth* for the perfect *guru;* also found as *amrit birakh* (tree of ambrosia), *santokh rukh* (tree of contentment), *suinay kā birakh* (tree of gold). The term originates in the Middle Eastern myth of the Tree of Life, commonly used as a metaphor for the divine Word, in Jewish, Christian, Manichaean, Mandaean, gnostic, and Sufi, and other earlier traditions. The Tree of Life, with its flowers and fruits, is the bestower of eternal life. It makes its first appearance in Babylonian mythology, and is well known from its inclusion in the *Genesis* myth of the Garden of Eden.

Guru Nānak writes:

O Nānak, the *guru* is the tree *(rukh)* of contentment *(santokh),*
with flowers *(phul)* of faith, and fruits *(phal)* of divine wisdom.
Watered with the Lord's love, it remains forever green:
through deeds and meditation.
Honour is obtained by eating this tasty dish:
of all gifts, this is the greatest gift.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 147, MMS*

The *guru* is the tree *(birakh)* of gold *(suinay),*
with leaves of coral, and blossoms of jewels and rubies.
The words from his mouth are fruits of jewels:
within his heart, he beholds the Lord.
O Nānak, he is obtained by those, upon whose faces and foreheads
such prerecorded destiny is written.
The sixty-eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage are contained
in the constant worship of the feet of the exalted *guru.*

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 147, AGK*

And from Guru Angad:

The true *guru* is the tree *(birakh)* of ambrosia *(amrit):*
it bears the fruit of sweet nectar *(amrit ras).*
He alone receives it, who is so predestined,
through the *guru*'s *Shabd* (Word).
One who walks in harmony with the will of the true *guru,*
is blended with the Lord.

*Guru Angad, Ādi Granth 1245, AGK*

See also: **Tree of Life** (3.1).

**bishop** (Gk. *episcopos*) One of the first ranks to emerge in the priesthood of early Christianity; generally, a priest having religious authority over a particular area or province, particularly to administer and support the priests in that area (a 'see' or 'diocese').

See also: **priest**.

**blama** (T) *Lit.* superior one, none above; a Buddhist monk of Tibet or Mongolia; phonetically rendered as Tibetan *blama,* the 'b' being silent; a contraction of *bla na med pa* (nothing superior). See **lama**.

**bodhisattva** (S/H), **bodhisatta** (Pa), **byang chub sems dpa'** (T), **púsà** (C), **bosatsu** (J) *Lit.* of the essence or being *(sattva)* of wisdom *(bodhi);* one whose essential being is wisdom or perfect knowledge; in practice, one who is on the path to becoming perfectly enlightened; sometimes translated as 'enlightening being' or 'enlightenment being'; in the Pali texts of *Theravāda* Buddhism, a term used by the Buddha of himself when he was in search of liberation; in Tibetan Buddhism, one of the four transcendental states that a human being can attain, the others being those of an *arhat* (noble one), a *buddha,* and a *pratyeka-buddha* (one who attains enlightenment for himself alone); a term mostly used in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, sometimes as *mahā-bodhisattva* (great *bodhisattva*) or in conjunction with *mahāsattva* (great being), as *bodhisattva-mahāsattva.* Although the commonly used Sanskrit term is *bodhisattva,* some scholars have suggested that the original word may have been *bodhisakta,* which means one who is directed towards or occupied with enlightenment.

The concept of the *bodhisattva* highlights one of the fundamental differences between *Mahāyāna* and *Theravāda* Buddhism. In *Mahāyāna,* a *bodhisattva* is a compassionate being who has vowed to postpone his entry into *nirvāṇa* until all sentient beings have been liberated from *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death) and have attained enlightenment. The *Theravāda* ideal is that of the *arhat,* of complete absorption in *nirvāṇa.* Many *Mahāyāna* Buddhists who have taken the *bodhisattva* vows repeat them regularly in anticipation of their future freedom. Early *Mahāyāna* texts assert that *bodhisattvas* can only be male, but later texts accept that they can also be female.

*Mahāyāna* Buddhism thus considers a *bodhisattva* to have reached a higher stage than the *arhat.* "To use William James' picturesque expression," says Radhakrishnan, "if at the last day all creation was shouting 'Hallelujah!' and there remained one cockroach with an unrequited love, that would spoil the peace of a *bodhisattva,* though not the absorption of the *arhat.*"[1]

Because of his love for the beings who suffer on the wheel of transmigration, a *bodhisattva* stops short of *nirvāṇa* and engages in the task of leading beings in the *Dharma,* in the Way of true knowledge. Compassion *(karuṇā)* and wisdom *(prajñā)* constitute the essence of his existence:

> The essential nature of all *bodhisattvas* is a greatly compassionate heart *(mahākaruṇa-chitta),* and all sentient beings are encompassed by his love. Therefore, *bodhisattvas* do not cling to the blissful taste that is produced by the various modes of mental tranquillity *(dhyāna),* nor do they covet the fruit of their meritorious deeds, which may increase their own happiness.
>
> Their spiritual state is higher than that of the *shrāvakas* (hearers, disciples), for they do not leave all sentient beings behind them. They practise altruism; they seek the fruit of *buddha*-wisdom.

> With a greatly compassionate heart, they look upon the sufferings of all beings, who are diversely tortured in hell of *Avīchi* as a result of their sins – a hell whose limits are infinite and where an endless round of misery is made possible on account of the many kinds of *karma* (committed by sentient beings). *Bodhisattvas* filled with pity and love desire to suffer themselves for the sake of those miserable beings.
>
> But they are well acquainted with the truth that all those diverse sufferings causing diverse states of misery are in one sense an appearance and unreal, while in another sense they are not so. They know also that those who have spiritual insight into the emptiness *(shūnyatā)* of all existences, thoroughly understand why those rewards of *karma* are brought forth in the ways they are.
>
> Therefore, all *bodhisattvas,* in order to emancipate sentient beings from misery, are inspired with great spiritual energy, and mingle themselves in the filth of birth and death. Though they make themselves subject to the laws of birth and death thereby, their hearts are free from sins and attachments. They are like those immaculate, undefiled lotus flowers that grow out of mud, but yet are not contaminated by it.
>
> Their greatly sympathetic hearts, which constitute the essence of their being, never leave suffering beings behind (in their journey towards enlightenment). Their spiritual insight is in the Emptiness *(Shūnyatā)* of things, but (their work of salvation) is never outside the world of sins and sufferings.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Bodhichitta; cf. in OMBS pp.292–94*

In order to fulfil his vow to help souls attain *nirvāṇa,* a *bodhisattva* has to subject himself to the laws of birth and death, but he lives an immaculate and undefiled life in the world. By an exchange *(parīvarta)* of the fruits of his own meritorious deeds for the sins of others, a *bodhisattva* relieves their misery, he himself suffering the consequences of their bad *karma.*

This altruistic vow of the *bodhisattva* is subdivided into ten separate vows. According to Dwight Goddard's free translation and rearrangement of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra,* these are:

> To honour and serve all *buddhas;* to spread the knowledge and practice of the *Dharma;* to welcome all *buddhas*-to-come; to practise the six *pāramitās* (perfections); to persuade all beings to embrace the *Dharma;* to attain a perfect understanding of the universe; to attain a perfect understanding of the essential kinship of all beings; to attain perfect self-realization of the oneness of all the *buddhas* and *tathāgatas* in the essential nature of their self, their purpose, and their resources; to become acquainted with all the 'skilful means *(upāya-kaushalya)*' by which these vows may be carried out for the emancipation of all

> beings; and to realize supreme enlightenment through the perfect self-realization of noble wisdom, ascending the stages and entering *tathāgata*-hood.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG pp.147–48*

But there are variations between traditions. China, Japan and Korea speak of only four all-encompassing vows:

**1**. Sentient beings are beyond number; I vow to save them all.
**2**. The passions are inexhaustible; I vow to extinguish them all.
**3**. The gateways to the *Dharma* are beyond measure; I vow to learn them all.
**4**. There is nothing higher than the Way of the Buddha; I vow to attain it.

With the development of *Mahāyāna,* the established monastic precepts were supplemented by a set of *bodhisattva* precepts, of which there are ten major and forty-eight minor, as detailed in the *Brahmajāla Sūtra (Brahmā Net Sūtra).* The ten major precepts forbid killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, dishonesty, the use of intoxicants, fault-finding, boasting, jealousy, anger and ill will, and slandering the three jewels (the Buddha, the *Dharma,* and the *sangha* or Buddhist community). The minor precepts consist of a list of prohibitions against less serious moral and behavioural offences.

From the evidence of ancient documents, it is clear that some laypeople, both men and women, also took the *bodhisattva* vows. Appropriate formal ceremonies are detailed in a number of *Mahāyāna* texts, sometimes conducted in public, in which the supplicants vowed to follow the precepts. Ceremonies of confession for infringements of the precepts are also described. The early *sūtras* indicate the broad spectrum of ways in which *Mahāyāna* diversified. Doctrine, practices, beliefs regarding liberation and enlightenment, mythology, social organization and so on were all subject to change and reform. Some texts take a critical and polemical approach to those who sought enlightenment solely for themselves; others are more accepting of earlier viewpoints. Some presume an audience of monks and nuns; others speak to lay *bodhisattvas.* Sometimes there is lively disagreement between one group and another. Yet the change and diversification does not appear to have had any central organization or impetus, but to have been a broad-based, self-energizing movement.

The state of mind and motivation that leads someone to take the vows of a *bodhisattva* is known as *bodhichitta* (thought of enlightenment). *Bodhichitta* is the desire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all other sentient beings. It is said to have two aspects: the *bodhichitta* of aspiration *(praṇidhāna),* which implies the declaration of intention to follow the *bodhisattva* path; and the *bodhichitta* of application, which leads to actual practice. As eighth-century Shāntideva wrote in his classic *The Way of a Bodhisattva:*

> Wishing to depart and setting out upon the road,
> this is how the difference is conceived.
> The wise and learned thus should understand
> this difference, which is ordered and progressive.
>
> *Shāntideva, Way of a Bodhisattva, in WMPT p.219*

Both of these, however, are regarded as relative when compared to the actual experience of enlightenment that arises from intention and practice, and which is known as absolute *bodhichitta.*

The *bodhisattva* ideal receives its inspiration from the many tales in the *Jātaka* (birth stories) concerning the Buddha's previous lives, his attempts to develop good qualities such as selflessness, morality and wisdom, and his progress towards the final birth in which he attained enlightenment and became the Buddha. However, the *Mahāyāna bodhisattva* ideal, as it later came to be understood, is nowhere mentioned in the *Jātakas.*

There are some variations in the way in which this ideal is understood by different schools. Some speak of the *bodhisattva* as one who is on the path to full enlightenment; others say that the *bodhisattva* is one who has renounced enlightenment until all other sentient beings have entered *nirvāṇa.*

Tibetan sources speak of three types of *bodhisattva.* The king-like *bodhisattva* wishes to become a *buddha* as soon as possible, so that he can lead others to enlightenment. The boatman-like *bodhisattva* wishes to ferry others across *saṃsāra,* and so reach the shores of enlightenment along with them. The shepherd-like *bodhisattva* walks behind his sheep, and so reaches enlightenment after all those in his care have done so.

The Tibetan monk Geshe Kelsang Gyatso points out, however, that until one has attained enlightenment oneself, it is not possible to lead others to that state. Therefore, only the king-like *bodhisattva* is being realistic. The attitude of those who wish to lead others to enlightenment without having reached it themselves is like a child who thinks he can protect his parents – sublime, but mistaken.[2]

Patrul Rinpoche of the Nyingma school, on the other hand, sees things the other way around. He maintains that "The king's way… is the least courageous of the three. The boatman's way… is more courageous.… The shepherd's way… is the most courageous of all," because he puts their welfare ahead of his own.[3] Perhaps there is truth in both perspectives.

A *bodhisattva* embarks on the path to enlightenment by cultivating the six perfections *(pāramitās)* and the four means of attraction *(saṃgraha-vastu)* – of attracting beings to the *Dharma.* Various stages are identified. Taking the community *(sangha)* of monks, nuns and dedicated laypeople as a whole, there are four overall stages. Beginners, naturally enough, are at the earliest stages, followed by more advanced monks who have attained a higher degree of realization; *bodhisattvas* have reached further still; and

*bodhisattva-mahāsattvas* have come to the last stages of perfection before finally attaining full enlightenment.

On the way to enlightenment, a *bodhisattva* is generally said to pass through ten levels or stages *(bhūmi),* of which there are various descriptions. These stages are often linked to the development of the six *pāramitās* (perfections), to which a further four are added to correspond to the ten stages. An extensive description of these stages is found the *Dashabhūmika Sūtra* ('*Sūtra* of the Ten Stages'), which also appears as a chapter in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra.*[4] The Tibetan monk Gampopa (1079–1153) also provides a detailed description in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation.*[5] In summary, the ten *bhūmis* are:

**1**. *Pramuditā-bhūmi* Great joy; joy at having overcome all previous difficulties. The *bodhisattva* sets out on his journey with great happiness. He attempts to practise all the perfections, with a focus on the *pāramitā* of generosity *(dāna).* He also brings other beings to the *Dharma* through the four means of attraction *(saṃgraha-vastu),* these being generosity *(dāna),* kind and loving words *(priya-vādita),* helpful deeds *(artha-kriyā),* and sympathy *(samānārtha).*

**2**. *Vimalā-bhūmi* Purity, being without taint. Freedom from impurity in thought and deed, practising the *pāramitā* of moral discipline and good conduct *(shīla).*

**3**. *Prabhākarī-bhūmi* Refulgence, luminosity, illumination. The first stage of meditation, by which means the *bodhisattva* deepens his understanding and awareness. The light of the *Dharma* radiates from him, and he focuses on developing the *pāramitā* of patience and forbearance *(kshānti).*

**4**. *Archishmatī-bhūmi* Radiance, brilliance; burning or glowing wisdom. His radiant light burns whatever stands in the way of enlightenment. With effort and enthusiasm, he devotes himself to the development of all the good qualities, the *pāramitā* of this stage being vigour or effort *(vīrya).*

**5**. *Sudurjayā-bhūmi* Hard to conquer, difficult to train, mastery of what is most difficult. The *bodhisattva* focuses on his own spiritual development, at the same time helping others to do the same. The *pāramitā* of this stage is meditation and concentration *(dhyāna),* also called the *samādhi* (concentration) *pāramitā.* Learning to bring the mind under complete control by means of meditation is the most difficult task that any being can undertake.

**6**. *Abhimukhī-bhūmi* Facing forward, direct presence, ascent above the duality of purity and impurity. The *bodhisattva* becomes the recipient of

great wisdom and understanding *(prajñā)* concerning the true nature of things. Here he dwells in neither *saṃsāra* nor *nirvāṇa.* The *pāramitā* is that of wisdom *(prajñā).* He is now master of the six *pāramitās.*

**7**. *Dūraṃgamā-bhūmi* Gone afar, far-going; going beyond the self. Here the *bodhisattva* comes to understand the virtue of 'skilful means *(upāya-kaushalya)*' – the many methods and expedients by which he can truly teach and inspire others.

**8**. *Achalā-bhūmi* Immovable steadfastness; the attainment of calm imperturbability. The possibility of retrogression is now past. The *bodhisattva* develops the power to choose his own rebirth. Here, the virtue being emphasized is aspiration *(praṇidhāna)* and the longing to proceed.

**9**. *Sādhumatī-bhūmi* Good mind. Attainment of the most excellent perceptive and discriminating wisdom, the virtue emphasized being spiritual power *(bala).*

**10**. *Dharmamegha-bhūmi* Cloud of *dharma.* Attainment of full perfection and enlightenment, becoming a fully enlightened *buddha.* The virtue here is primal wisdom *(jñāna)* concerning all things.

The *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* has an interesting perspective on these ten *bhūmis.* The subject is introduced when the *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* Mahāmati asks the Buddha to describe the stages to enlightenment. The text follows the traditional exposition of Buddhist *sūtras,* in which the Buddha is reported as speaking, even though the text may have been written many centuries after the Buddha's departure. The Buddha first explains that the inner path experienced by "*bodhisattvas, shrāvakas* (hearers, disciples), and *pratyeka-buddhas* (those who attain enlightenment for themselves alone)" has various stages. Although the text is far from clear, and there are several versions of it, the general import seems to be reasonably straightforward. The stages depict a steady expansion of consciousness and consequent understanding of the nature of Reality. Again according to Goddard's rearrangement of this *sūtra,* entering the first stage

> is like passing out of the glare of the shadows into a realm of 'no-shadows'; it is like passing out of the noise and tumult of the crowded city into the quietness of solitude. The *bodhisattva* feels within himself the awakening of a great heart of compassion, and he utters his ten original vows.... In the spirit of these vows, the *bodhisattva* gradually ascends the stages to the sixth stage.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG pp.147–48*

Attainment of the six *pāramitās* then occupies the *bodhisattva* as far as the sixth stage. Entering the seventh stage, the *bodhisattva* – realizing that ego, individuality, separateness and multiplicity have no reality – perceives everything as undifferentiated, and "attains perfect tranquillity in every minute of his mental life". At the eighth stage, looking back, he can see that the stages from the first up to the sixth, which embrace everything within the "three worlds", are nothing more than "*chitta* (thought), *manas* (mind), and *mano-vijñāna* (mental knowledge)". Everything is then perceived as *māyā* (illusion). The first seven stages are entirely "of the mind" where duality prevails. Even the eighth stage, which is said to be formless, is still touched by the mind. Moving onwards, the ninth stage has a reality distinct from that of the mind, and beyond that, in the tenth stage, there is complete enlightenment, utter oneness, and total non-differentiation.[6]

The eighth stage is thus a significant point in the 'journey'. When the *bodhisattva* reaches this stage, there is a "turning about in the deepest seat of consciousness":[7]

> Ever since beginningless time, the mind system has perceived multiplicities of forms and conditions and ideas that the thinking mind has divided up and that the empirical mind (the mind associated with the senses) has experienced and grasped and clung to. From this has arisen a habitual energy which, by its accumulation, has created the illusions of existence and nonexistence, individuality and generality, and has thus perpetuated the dream state of false imagination. But now, to the *bodhisattvas* of the eighth stage, that life is past and is remembered as it truly was – as a passing dream.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG p.152*

At this stage, too, the *bodhisattva* becomes aware that he has received a body consisting entirely of mindstuff *(manomaya-kāya).* While he remains in the physical body, he still retains his "old mind", which is needed to "serve the needs of the old body", but the "old body" is now completely "free from the dominion of the mortal mind":

> There has been an inconceivable transformation and death *(achintya-pariṇāma-chyuti)* by which the false imagination of a particularized individual personality has been transcended by a realization of his oneness with the universalized consciousness of *tathāgata*-hood, from which realization there is no turning back. With that realization, he finds himself amply endowed with all the *tathāgata's* powers, mental faculties and self-mastery and, just as the good earth is the support of all beings in the world of desire *(kāma-dhātu),* so the *tathāgatas* become the support of all beings in the transcendental world of no form.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG p.153*

This same story, says the text, concerning "the abodes and stages of buddhahood . . . has been told, is told, and will be told by all the *buddhas*". It is a universal truth, transcending time. The final stage, it continues, "has neither bounds nor limits; it surpasses all the *buddha*-lands (heavens), and pervades the *akanishṭha* (realm of Buddhist deities) and the heavenly mansions of *tushita*". "It is the highest station" of "self-realization and absolute purity. . . . Its rays of light ascend like a mass of fire." In fact, the text concludes by saying that all stages exist only within the utter oneness of the tenth stage. The highest Reality is one, and everything exists within it.[8]

In this ascent or evolution, there is a difference between the experience of the *bodhisattva* on the one hand, and of the *shrāvakas* and *pratyeka-buddhas* on the other. According to the writer of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra,* who is putting forward the *Mahāyāna* viewpoint at the expense of *Theravāda,* the sixth stage marks a parting of the ways. The disciples and *pratyeka-buddhas* become absorbed in the bliss of that stage, and take that as their *nirvāṇa;* but the *bodhisattvas,* with the help of the *buddhas,* resist the temptation, and rise higher:

> All earnest disciples *(shrāvakas), pratyeka-buddhas* and *arhats* have ascended thus far (to the sixth stage) but, being enchanted by the bliss of the *samādhis* (absorptions) and not being supported by the power of the *buddhas,* they pass to their *nirvāṇa.* The same fate would befall the *bodhisattvas,* except for the sustaining power of the *buddhas,* by which they are enabled to refuse to enter *nirvāṇa* until all beings can enter *nirvāṇa* with them. The *tathāgatas* point out to them the virtues of buddhahood, which are beyond the conceptions of the intellectual mind, and they encourage and strengthen the *bodhisattvas* not to give in to the enchantment of the bliss of the *samādhis,* but to press on to further advancement along the stages. If the *bodhisattvas* had entered *nirvāṇa* at this stage – and they would have done so without the sustaining power of the *buddhas* – there would have been the cessation of all things, and the family of the *tathāgatas* would have become extinct.
>
> With the new strength that comes to them from the *buddhas* and with the more nearly perfect insight that is theirs by reason of their advance in self-realization of noble wisdom, they re-examine the nature of the mind system, the egolessness of personality, and the parts that grasping and attachment and the energy of habit play in the unfolding drama of life; they re-examine the illusions of . . . logical analysis, and the various elements that bear upon enlightenment and self-realization and, in the thrill of their new powers of self-mastery, the *bodhisattvas* enter upon the seventh stage of 'gone afar *(dūraṃgamā)*'.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG pp.148–49*

Even so, the *bodhisattvas* enjoy the peace and bliss of the seventh stage, which is beyond the stages of the six *pāramitās,* and which is essentially that of *nirvāṇa,* because they are no longer functioning in the realms of duality and separateness:

> Supported by the sustaining power of the *buddhas,* the *bodhisattvas* at this stage enter into the bliss of the *samādhi* of perfect tranquillity. Owing to their original vows, they are transported by emotions of love and compassion as they become aware of the part they are to perform in carrying out their vows for the emancipation of all beings. Thus they do not enter into *nirvāṇa,* although in truth they too are already in *nirvāṇa* because, in their emotions of love and compassion, there arises no sense of separateness; henceforth, for them, there is no longer any sense of separateness. Because of Transcendental Intelligence, only one conception is present – promotion of the realization of noble wisdom. This is called the *bodhisattvas' nirvāṇa,* the losing of oneself in the bliss of perfect self-yielding. This is the seventh stage, the stage of 'gone afar'.
>
> *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG p.149*

There are varying descriptions of the state attained by the *bodhisattva.* Some *Mahāyāna sūtras* maintain that a *bodhisattva* simply does not enter *nirvāṇa* until his task has been accomplished; others say he experiences a special form of *nirvāṇa (apratishṭhita-nirvāṇa),* which implies an 'unlocalized' or non-specific kind of *nirvāṇa,* like that described in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra.*

While descriptions of the stages may provide some inspiration and possibly clarification too, actually travelling the spiritual path is by no means a smooth ride. Whatever a person's best intentions, the mind will continue to vacillate. A story is told to illustrate the point:

> In days of yore, an older master was travelling along a country road, followed by a disciple carrying his bags. As they walked, they saw lands being tilled while farmers and oxen were strained to the utmost. Countless worms and insects were killed in the process, and birds were swooping to eat them. This led the disciple to wonder to himself, "How hard it is to make a living. I will cultivate with all my strength, become a *buddha* and save all these creatures."
>
> Immediately the master, an *arhat* able to read the thoughts of others, turned around and said, "Let me have those heavy bags and I will follow you." The disciple was puzzled but did as instructed and walked in front.
>
> As they continued on their way with the hot sun bearing down on them, dust swirling all around them, the road stretching endlessly in

front, the disciple grew more and more tired. It wasn't long before he thought to himself, "There are so many sentient beings and there is so much suffering, how can I possibly help them all? Perhaps I should try to help myself first."

Immediately, the master behind him said, "Stop. Now you carry the bags and follow me." The puzzled disciple did as told, knowing he was not supposed to ask questions. He took up the bags again and walked behind.

This sequence repeated itself several times. The master walked in front with the disciple carrying the bags, then the disciple in front with the master carrying the bags, back and forth, until they stopped for lunch. Then the disciple gathered his courage and asked the reason why. The master said, "When you had exalted thoughts of saving all sentient beings, you had the mind of a *bodhisattva,* and I as an *arhat* had to follow you. But as soon as you had selfish thoughts, you were no longer a *bodhisattva,* and being junior to me in years and cultivation, you had to carry my bags.

*"Parable: Bodhisattva," Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism, SGB pp.552–53*

Just as the Buddha was the ideal for early Buddhism, the *bodhisattva* became the ideal of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Over time, some of these *bodhisattvas* became invested with specific qualities and appearances, portrayed in Buddhist art and looked upon as celestial beings or benign deities to be adored and worshipped, embodying particular characteristics such as wisdom or compassion. They are not historical personalities.

The four principal *bodhisattvas* of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism are Avalokiteshvara, Mañjushrī, Samantabhadra and Kshitigarbha. In many *Mahāyāna sūtras,* Avalokiteshvara, Mañjushrī and Vajrapāni are the three attendants of the Buddha, symbolizing his qualities. Avalokiteshvara represents his compassion, Mañjushrī his wisdom, and Vajrapāni his power. Their roles, however, are not fixed and, in some texts and Buddhist art, they appear as companions to various other celestial *buddhas.* The well-known Bodhisattva Maitreya also holds a prominent position as the *buddha*-to-be, the *bodhisattva* who will become a *buddha* in his next incarnation. Such *bodhisattvas* are known as 'one-life *bodhisattvas*'. The same celestial *bodhisattvas* often appear in the various Buddhist schools and traditions. In some instances, because they have different names in different languages, they may appear as different beings or are invested with different roles and characteristics.

Numerous legends have been woven around the celestial *bodhisattvas.* In many instances, cults have developed, focused upon them and their counterparts, the celestial *buddhas.* People pray to them for their intercession, regarding them as both helpers in life, and spiritual saviours who will enable them to reach one of the Buddhist pure lands (paradises) after death,

from where they will continue their journey to enlightenment. In Japan, for instance, the Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha (J. Jizō), who vowed not to attain full enlightenment until all the hells were empty, is regarded as an approachable and affectionate helper in all aspects of life, however mundane. There are statues of him in almost every village, by the roadside, and in graveyards, and people pray to him for help with all the usual human problems of ill health, financial worries, work, social issues, and so forth.

The *bodhisattva* ideal and the worship of celestial beings – significant aspects of *Mahāyāna* doctrine and practice – therefore constitute two fundamental differences between the *Mahāyāna* and *Theravāda* schools. The older *Theravāda* tradition focuses almost entirely on the Buddha as a human being who taught the path to enlightenment. Theravadins point out that such aspects of *Mahāyāna* diverge from the original teachings of the Buddha, for they are not mentioned in any of the earlier Buddhist texts.

According to the *Theravāda* Pali texts, a *bodhisatta* is a being who is destined to become a future *buddha.* Before this final birth, he dwells in the paradise known as *tushita.* In the Pali canon and associated commentaries, the term *bodhisatta* is used primarily for Prince Siddhārtha when he was seeking enlightenment. The term is used by the Buddha himself in an expression repeated a number of times, "when I was still just an unawakened *bodhisatta,* the thought occurred to me . . .".[9] The ideal of the *bodhisattva,* as it is understood in the *Mahāyāna* tradition is nowhere mentioned or advised, nor is there any record in the Pali texts of anyone espousing it.

Nevertheless, perhaps as a result of retroactive influence from the *Mahāyāna* tradition, the term is used in *Theravāda* for those who are regarded or respected as well advanced on the road to enlightenment. Sri Lankan kings from the third to fifteenth centuries were described as *bodhisattvas,* and their activities as rulers were clearly linked to the development of the ten *pāramitās.* In Thailand, some modern *Theravāda* monks who teach meditation are regarded as *arhats* or *bodhisattvas.* In these contexts, the term is clearly being used in a general manner for those who are regarded as well advanced on the spiritual path.

1. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy, IP1* p.601.
2. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune, JPGF* p.422.
3. Patrul Rinpoche, *Words of My Perfect Teacher, WMPT* p.218.
4. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 26.
5. Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 19:108a–117b, *JOLG* pp.239–52, *JOLK* pp.263–77.
6. *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* 4:211–16; *cf. LSMT* pp.182–86.
7. *Lankāvatāra Sūtra; cf. BBDG* p.172.
8. *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* 4:215–16; *cf. LSMT* p.186.

9. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 4 *(Bhayabherava Sutta),* 14 *(Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta),* 19 *(Dvedhāvitakka Sutta),* 36 *(Mahāsaccaka Sutta), PTSM1* pp.16, 92, 114, 240; *MNTB;* see also *Anguttara Nikāya* 5:196, *Supina Sutta, PTSA3* pp.240–42, *ANTB.*

**Bogomils** A gnostic, dualist Christian sect, originating in mid-tenth-century Bulgaria, and flourishing in the Balkans between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. Drawing especially on the doctrines of the earlier Paulicians, the movement was probably formed as a gnostic counterpart to the newly founded and reform-oriented Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Named after their founder, the priest Bogomil, the Bogomils rejected many fundamental Christian doctrines such as the Incarnation, the Eucharist and baptism, as well as the entire administration of the Orthodox Church. They are known to have adhered to a high moral code, something acknowledged even by their most adamant critics. They are said to have been vegetarian, to have abstained from wine, and to have avoided anything that brought them into close contact with matter. They are also said to have condemned marriage, though it is difficult to see how the movement could have lasted five centuries without the development of Bogomil families passing the belief from parent to child. Like all such groups, their teachings are largely known through the unsympathetic and incomplete records of their opponents.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Bogomils spread throughout European and Asian areas of the Byzantine Empire, coinciding with the spread of the Cathars in Western and Southern Europe. By the early thirteenth century, a network of gnostic, dualistic communities stretched from the Black Sea to the Atlantic.

Despite condemnation by the Bulgarian ecclesiastical authorities, the Bogomils remained a powerful force in Bulgaria until the late fourteenth century, only going into decline in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of southeastern Europe in the fifteenth century. In modern times, traces of a dualistic tradition are still discernible in the folklore of southern Slavs.[1]

See also: **Cathari**, **Paulicians**.

1. Historical material drawn from "Bogomil," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2001).

**Brahma-jñānī**, **Brahma-vidvas** (S), **Brahm-gyānī** (H), **Brahm giānī** (H/Pu) *Lit.* one who has knowledge *(gyānī, jñānī, vidvas)* of *Brahma;* a knower of *Brahman;* one who knows the absolute Reality or God; a God-conscious being; one who has experienced the Divine. The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* says:

> The knowers of *Brahman (Brahma-vidvas),* by knowing what is therein,
> become devoted to *Brahman,* merge themselves in it,
> and are liberated from rebirth.
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 1:7*

The nineteenth-century Bengali mystic Ramakrishna briefly describes the practice of *jñāna yoga* and the attainment of *Brahma-jñāna:*

> The same Being whom the *jñānīs* call *Brahman* (the Absolute) is called *Ātman* (universal Soul) by the yogis and *Bhagavān* (personal God with divine attributes) by the *bhaktas* (devotees).... The *jñānī* who holds on to *jñāna yoga* reasons saying, "Not this, not this." That is, *Brahman* is neither this nor that: neither the individual soul, nor the external world. When, as a result of this reasoning, the mind becomes steady, it vanishes, and one goes into *samādhi.* Then one attains *Brahma-jñāna* (knowledge of the Absolute). The *Brahma-jñānī* truly realizes that *Brahman* is real and the world unreal; names and forms are all like dreams. What *Brahman* is cannot be described by the word of mouth....
>
> When the mind of a person rises to the throat, he loses all his ignorance and illusion. He does not then like to talk or hear anything except about the Lord. If someone talks of other matters, he leaves that place. The sixth plane of the mind is the forehead. When the mind reaches there, one sees a divine form all the twenty-four hours a day. However, a bit of I-ness subsists even then. Such a person feels intoxicated at the vision of that supreme and unique form. He tries to touch and embrace this form but cannot. It is like the light in the lantern. One feels that one can touch the light, but because of the glass in between, one cannot touch it. In the top of the head is the seventh plane. When the mind rises to it, one goes into *samādhi,* and the *Brahma-jñānī* has direct vision of *Brahman.*
>
> *Ramakrishna, in Kathāmṛita 1:2.3, 1:3.6; cf. SRK1*

Keshavdās (1555–1617) says that those who know Reality always speak of the immortal Word:

> So pure are *Brahm-gyānīs*
> that they always speak of the immortal Word *(amrit Bānī).*
>
> *Keshavdās, Futkar Shabd 6:3, KDA p.4*

In the *Ādi Granth, Brahm* is one of the many words used for God. Guru Arjun therefore depicts the saint or *satguru* as the true *Brahm giānī,* the God-realized one who knows God from experience. Such a saint, he writes in a long passage,

is continually aware of the Divine. Seeing God in everything and everybody, he remains unsullied by the impurities of the world:

The true One is on his mind,
  and the true One is upon his lips:
He sees only the One –
O Nānak, these are the qualities
  of the God-conscious being *(Brahm giānī).*

The *Brahm giānī* is always unattached,
  as the lotus in the water remains detached.
The *Brahm giānī* is ever unstained, like the sun,
  which gives its comfort and warmth to all.
The *Brahm giānī* looks upon all alike, like the wind,
  which blows equally upon the king and the poor beggar.
The *Brahm giānī* has an even patience, like the earth,
  which is dug up by one, and anointed with sandal paste by another.
This is the quality of the *Brahm giānī:*
  O Nānak, his inherent nature is like a warming fire.

The *Brahm giānī* is the purest of the pure,
  as filth does not attach to water.
The *Brahm giānī*'s mind is enlightened,
  like the sky above the earth.
To the *Brahm giānī,* friend and foe are the same.
The *Brahm giānī* has no egotistical pride.
The *Brahm giānī* is the highest of the high:
  within his own mind, he is the most humble of all.
They alone become *Brahm giānīs,* O Nānak,
  whom God Himself makes so.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 272, AGK*

A spiritually enlightened and God-conscious being is kind and humble, showering blessings upon all:

The *Brahm giānī* is the dust of all,
  the *Brahm giānī* knows the nature of the soul.
The *Brahm giānī* shows kindness to all,
  no evil comes from the *Brahm giānī.*
The *Brahm giānī* is always impartial,
  nectar rains down from the glance of the *Brahm giānī.*
The *Brahm giānī* is free from entanglements,
  the lifestyle of the *Brahm giānī* is spotlessly pure.

Spiritual wisdom is the food of the *Brahm giānī:*
O Nānak, the *Brahm giānī* is absorbed in God's meditation.
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 272–73, AGK*

His entire support is that of God. His body may die, but his inner being possesses the immortality of God. His mind and ego are always under control, and everybody benefits from his company:

The *Brahm giānī* centres his hopes on the One alone,
the *Brahm giānī* never perishes.
The *Brahm giānī* is steeped in humility,
the *Brahm giānī* delights in doing good to others.
The *Brahm giānī* has no worldly entanglements,
the *Brahm giānī* holds his wandering mind under control.
The *Brahm giānī* acts in the common good,
the *Brahm giānī* blossoms in fruitfulness.
In the company of the *Brahm giānī,* all are saved:
O Nānak, through the *Brahm giānī,*
the whole world meditates on God.
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 273, AGK*

His inner essence and reality is that of the divine, eternal and immortal Name, the creative power of God. He is never unconscious of God, and his inner being is constantly infused with divine peace and bliss:

The *Brahm giānī* loves the one Lord alone,
the *Brahm giānī* dwells with God.
The *Brahm giānī* takes the Name *(Nām)* as his support,
the *Brahm giānī* has the Name *(Nām)* as his family.
The *Brahm giānī* is awake and aware, for ever and ever,
the *Brahm giānī* renounces his proud ego.
In the mind of the *Brahm giānī,* there is supreme bliss,
in the home of the *Brahm giānī,* there is everlasting bliss.
The *Brahm giānī* dwells in peaceful ease:
O Nānak, the *Brahm giānī* shall never perish.
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 273, AGK*

His entire being is supported by the Divine; he has no worries or concerns; those who are fortunate enough to meet and serve him come to understand that God is present within him:

The *Brahm giānī* knows God,
the *Brahm giānī* is in love with the One alone.

The *Brahm giānī* is carefree,
pure are the teachings of the *Brahm giānī.*
The *Brahm giānī* is made so by God Himself,
the *Brahm giānī* is gloriously great.
The *darshan,* the blessed vision of the *Brahm giānī,*
is obtained by great good fortune.
To the *Brahm giānī,* I make my life a sacrifice.
The *Brahm giānī* is sought by the great god *Shiva:*
O Nānak, the *Brahm giānī* is Himself the supreme Lord God.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 273, AGK*

The inner state of such a divine being is beyond normal human understanding:

The *Brahm giānī* cannot be appraised,
the *Brahm giānī* has all within his mind.
Who can know the mystery of the *Brahm giānī? –*
forever bow to the *Brahm giānī.*
The *Brahm giānī* cannot be described in words,
the *Brahm giānī* is the lord and master of all.
Who can describe the limits of the *Brahm giānī? –*
only the *Brahm giānī* can know the state of the *Brahm giānī.*
The *Brahm giānī* has no end or limitation:
O Nānak, to the *Brahm giānī,* bow forever in reverence.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 273, AGK*

His utter unity with God gives him the power of God. In reality, concludes Guru Arjun, he is God Himself:

The *Brahm giānī* is the creator of all the world,
the *Brahm giānī* lives forever, and does not die.
The *Brahm giānī* is the giver of the way of liberation of the soul,
the *Brahm giānī* is the perfect supreme Being, who orchestrates all.
The *Brahm giānī* is the helper of the helpless,
the *Brahm giānī* extends his hand to all.
The *Brahm giānī* owns the entire creation,
the *Brahm giānī* is himself the formless Lord.
The glory of the *Brahm giānī* belongs to the *Brahm giānī* alone:
O Nānak, the *Brahm giānī* is the Lord of all.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 273–74, AGK*

Although Indian *sants* have commonly used *Brahm* as a name for the supreme Lord, some *sants* have indicated that the *Brahm* or *Brahman* as described in the *Upanishads* is not the Ultimate, and that *Brahm gyānīs* have not yet

reached the final goal.[1] Speaking of *Brahm-gyānīs* as "true *gyānīs*", Swami Shiv Dayal Singh is unequivocal:

> There is no salvation for *vāchak gyānīs* (those who only talk *gyān*), for they only talk. In the case of true *gyānīs,* the *sthūl karmas* (gross *karmas*) only are destroyed, but not the *sūkshma karmas* (subtle *karmas*), as they can be destroyed only after reaching the region of the saints. It must be borne in mind that only saints can lead to salvation in this age, because there can be no salvation unless all *karmas,* both gross and subtle, are destroyed; and the *gyānīs* do not know the technique of destroying *karmas.*
>
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Prose 2:206, SBAT pp.116–17*

See also: **Brahman** (2.1), **jñānin**.

1. *E.g.* Kabīr, *Shabdāvalī* 1, *Bhed Bānī* 7:4, *KSS1* p.59; Tulsī Sāhib, *Ghaṭ Rāmāyaṇ* 1, *GR1* p.73.

**brāhmaṇ(a)** (S/Pa/H/Pu), **brahmaṇ** (Pu) *Lit.* one conversant with sacred knowledge; a member of the Hindu priestly caste; the first and the highest of the four principal castes of traditional Hindu society; generally anglicized as 'brahmin'. The other three castes are: *kshatriya,* the regal and warrior caste, whose duties include the protection and defence of the other castes, the maintenance of peace and prosperity, and the wise administration of justice; *vaishya,* the trading and agricultural caste; and *shūdra,* the caste comprising those who perform menial and unskilled labour. *Brāhmaṇa* is also the name of a section of the *Vedas* containing rules for conducting rites, together with explanatory comments.

In Jainism, hereditary temple priests who officiate at *Digambara* temples in South India are known as *Jaina brāhmaṇs,* also called *archaka* (worshipper), *Indras, paṇḍitas, purohita* (priest), or *upādhye.* Officiating in ceremonies such as marriages, they also perform the daily rites of worship to the images of the *Tīrthankaras* on behalf of Jain worshippers, who in North India perform these rituals for themselves. As a part of their remuneration, they are permitted to consume the food offerings made to the images, something that is prohibited to members of other castes. As a result, *Jaina brāhmaṇs* generally marry within their own subcaste.[1]

*Brāhmaṇ* has also come to mean a *paṇḍit* or any learned, intelligent, or well-read person. In the USA, a brahmin is a highly intelligent or socially exclusive person, especially a member of one of the older New England families. Used pejoratively, a *brāhmaṇ* is a social or intellectual snob.

The *brāhmaṇs* have been a powerful presence in India since ancient times. Mentioned in Vedic texts dating back probably three or four thousand years, they are regarded as the traditional custodians of the sacred and priestly knowledge of the *Vedas.* Historically, however, members of the other castes, especially the *kshatriyas,* have been involved in the development of Indian philosophy, especially *Vedānta* and *yoga.* Over time, Hindu culture has been safeguarded by close co-operation between the *kshatriyas* and *brāhmaṇs.*

Even in the ancient world, their fame had spread beyond the confines of India. A number of early Christian writers, notably Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Palladius, Jerome and Hippolytus,[2] speak of the *brāhmaṇs,* known to them by hearsay. For the most part, the *brāhmaṇs* are described as Indian philosophers and vegetarians. According to Philostratus' life history of the first-century (CE) Greek mystic Apollonius of Tyana, which is based on the notes of Damian, the disciple and travelling companion of Apollonius, Apollonius visited the *brāhmaṇs* of India, where the description is more fitting for yogis with supernatural powers than learned theologians and philosophers.[3] A few of the early Greek writers also mention them, though again the descriptions sound more like ascetics and yogis than learned priests.[4]

Traditionally, the role of the *brāhmaṇs* includes the acquisition, remembrance and imparting of the knowledge contained in the *Vedas,* the conduct of rites, sacrifices and worship, and the bestowal and receipt of charity. Traditionally, they wear the Hindu sacred thread (signifying twice-born) and a saffron mark *(tilak)* on the forehead. *Brāhmaṇs* do not charge for their services, but the recipient is expected to pay according to his means. The amount donated is tacitly understood to be related to the service rendered.

The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad,* an early (*c.*800 BCE) and significant text that attempts to bridge the gap between internal knowledge or experience of *Brahman* and external Vedic rites and sacrifices by finding esoteric symbolic meaning in the latter, seeks a symbolism in the cosmic origins of the *brāhmaṇ* and the *kshatriya.* In the beginning, in the undifferentiated state before creation, there was only *Brahman,* aloof and one within Himself. Therefore, He projected Himself as *kshatra* (power), which infuses all the rulers among the gods. According to this *Upanishad,* this is symbolized in the *rājasūya* sacrifice (a king's anointing) by the *brāhmaṇ* sitting below the *kshatriya.* Nevertheless, since the *brāhmaṇ* is a reflection or symbol of *Brahman,* the *brāhmaṇ* remains superior in rank. The reasoning is perhaps stretching a point, but it reflects both the social tensions present in those times, as well as the desire of the author to demonstrate mystical correlations between the religious and social norms of the day and the higher Reality:

> In the beginning, *Brahman* was 'all this'. It knew itself only as "I am *Brahman.*" Therefore, It became all. Whoever among the gods became

> awakened to this, he, indeed, became That. It is the same in the case of *ṛishis,* and the same in the case of human beings. Seeing that, the Ṛishi Vāmadeva began his hymn, "I was Manu and *Sūrya* (the sun deity) too." This is so even now.…
>
> In the beginning, *Brahman* was 'all this', only one. Being only one, It did not flourish. Therefore, It projected further an excellent form, the *kshatra* power, those who are *kshatras* (powerful rulers) among the gods: *Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mṛityu* (Death), and *Īshāna.* Therefore, there is nothing higher than *kshatra.* Therefore, at the *rājasūya* sacrifice, the *brāhmaṇ* sits below the *kshatriya* (*i.e.* the king). On *kshatriya*-hood alone does he confer this honour. Even so, the *brāhmaṇ* is the source of *kshatra.* Therefore, even though the *kshatriya* is exalted (in the sacrifice), in the end he resorts to the *brāhmaṇ* as his source. Therefore, he who injures a *brāhmaṇ* is striking at his own source. He becomes more evil, like one who slights a superior.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1:4.10–11; cf. PU pp.168–69, U3 pp.123, 125–26*

The final observation is reflected in the common belief that the murder of a *brāhmaṇ (brahma-hatyā)* is among the greatest of sins.[5] The *Upanishad* goes on to interpret the caste system as a reflection of the creative process, each caste having a purpose in the scheme of things, reflecting a higher and hidden process. Having set out his stall of symbolism, so to speak, the author goes on to introduce a dialogue between the *brāhmaṇ* Dṛiptabālaki and the *kshatriya* Ajātashatru. But here, it is the *kshatriya* who possesses the superior understanding, knowing *Brahman* to be the supreme Self, while the *brāhmaṇ*'s understanding is inferior, worshipping the deities (*purushas,* beings) of the sun, moon, fire, air, earth, and other things of the material universe as *Brahman.* As the *brāhmaṇ* explains each object of his worship, the *kshatriya* responds, "Please do not talk to me about him," disparaging in turn each of these forms of worship, and adding that he only worships the absolute *Brahman,* not *Brahman* in one of His created manifestations. The *brāhmaṇ* therefore takes the socially unusual step of asking the *kshatriya* for guidance on the nature of *Brahman,*[6] at which the *kshatriya* responds:

> Truly, it is contrary to custom for a *brāhmaṇ* to approach a *kshatriya,* thinking, "He will teach me about *Brahman.*" Nevertheless, I shall teach you how to know Him clearly.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 2:1.15; cf. PU p.188, U3 p.156*

And so begins the main part of this extensive *Upanishad,* whose teaching includes the states of consciousness, the subtle life energy *(prāṇa)* and the

subtle body, the relative and the absolute *Brahman,* the nature of the absolute Self, and so on.

The *Upanishad* contains a number of other comments concerning *brāhmaṇs.* One of the primary characters employed by the author to state his case is Yājñavalkya. On being asked about "the *Brahman* that is immediately and directly perceived, that is the Self within all", Yājñavalkya replies that it is actually "your own self that is within all". On being asked for further clarification, he explains:

> It is that which transcends hunger and thirst, suffering and delusion, old age and death. Knowing the *Ātman* (the divine Self), *brāhmaṇs* – having overcome the desire for sons, the desire for wealth, and the desire for (heavenly) worlds – live the life of mendicants *(bhikshu-charyā).* That which is the desire for sons is the desire for wealth, and that which is the desire for wealth is the desire for the worlds, for both these are but desires.
>
> Therefore, let a *brāhmaṇ,* after he has done with learning, desire to live as a child (in simplicity). When he has done with both learning and simplicity, then he becomes an ascetic *(muni).* When he has done with both asceticism and non-asceticism, then he becomes a (true) *brāhmaṇ* (a knower of *Brahman*).
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 3:5.1; cf. PU p.221, U3 p.217*

In another passage, speaking of "that great, unborn Self", the divine, universal Soul within all, Yājñavalkya says:

> *Brāhmaṇs* seek to realize It through the study of the *Vedas,* through sacrifices, through gifts, and through austerity, through relinquishing pleasures. Knowing It alone does one become a sage *(muni).* Desiring It alone as their world, mendicants wander forth. . . . This Self is, "Not this, not this."[7] It is imperceptible, for It is not perceived; undecaying, for It never decays; unattached, for It is never attached; unfettered, for It never feels pain, and never suffers injury.
>
> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4:4.22; cf. PU p.279, U3 p.302*

Discoursing on the true nature of a *brāhmaṇ,* the *Vajrasūchikā Upanishad* first reasons that the true nature of a *brāhmaṇ* is neither the incarnate soul *(jīva),* nor the body *(deha),* nor his birth *(jāti),* nor his knowledge *(jñāna),* nor his deeds *(karma),* nor the performer of religious rites *(dharma):*[8]

> Who then is a *brāhmaṇ?* He who, after directly perceiving, like an *āmalaka* fruit in the palm of one's hand, the Self without a second – which is devoid of the distinctions of birth, attribute and action; devoid

> of all faults such as the six infirmities, and the six states; having the form of truth, wisdom, bliss and eternity; which is, by Itself, devoid of distinctions, and is yet the source of endless distinctions; which functions as the indwelling Spirit in all beings; which, like *ākāsha* (space), pervades the interior and the exterior of everything; which has the nature of bliss, indivisible, immeasurable, realizable only through personal experience *(anubhava);* and which manifests itself directly (as one's self) – he who through the fulfilment of his nature, becomes rid of the imperfections of desire, attachment, *etc.,* and is endowed with the qualities of tranquillity *etc.;* is rid of the states of being such as spite, greed, expectation, bewilderment, *etc.;* and lives with a mind unaffected by ostentation, self-importance, and the like – only he who is possessed of these qualities is a *brāhmaṇ.* This is the view of the Vedic tradition. The attainment of the state of the *Brahman* is otherwise impossible. So meditate on *Brahman,* the Self who is being, consciousness and bliss, without a second.
>
> *Vajrasūchikā Upanishad 9; cf. PU pp.937–38*

The true *brāhmaṇ* is therefore an enlightened person, one who has realized *Brahman.* A recipe book is no longer required for one who has a meal in front of him. As the *Bhagavad Gītā* observes:

> All the *Vedas* put together
> are as useful to an enlightened *brāhmaṇ*
> as a small pond when everywhere is flooded with water. . . .
> Serenity, control of the senses, austerity, purity, straightforwardness,
> knowledge, insight, and faith in the supreme Being –
> These are the duties of a *brāhmaṇ,* born of his own nature.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 2:46, 18:42; cf. BGT*

Mystics do not divide human beings into classes or castes; nor do they commend rites and rituals as means to salvation; nor do they believe that an understanding of spirituality is confined to just one group of people. In times past, however, the *brāhmaṇs* had a strong influence over people. For this reason, Indian *sants* have often been less than complimentary in speaking of *brāhmaṇs.* Compared to other *sants,* Guru Amardās is moderate:

> He alone knows God, and he alone is a *brāhmaṇ,*
> who walks in harmony with the will of the true *guru.*
> One whose heart is filled with the Lord,
> is freed of egotism and disease;
> He chants the Lord's praises, gathers virtue,
> and his light merges into the Light.

How rare are those *brāhmaṇs* who, in this age, come to know God,
by lovingly focusing their consciousness on Him.
O Nānak, those who are blessed by the Lord's glance of grace,
remain lovingly attuned to the Name of the true Lord.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 850, AGK*

Likewise, Guru Nānak:

He alone is a *brahmaṇ* who bathes in *Brahm giān* (realization of God),
and who has God's praise for his leaves of worship.
There is but one Name, one pervading God,
and the one Light in the three worlds.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 992, MMS*

Thinking of the ranking given to human beings by the caste system, Guru Ravidās says simply:

How can you maintain the distinction of high and low
when all have arisen from the same divine Flame *(Joti)?*
How can you give discriminatory names to some, asks Ravidās,
when the same Name *(Nām)* is in all?…
How can you classify some as *brāhmaṇ* and some as non-*brāhmaṇ,*
when all in this world *(sansār)* have arisen
from the same divine Light *(Nūr)?*…
Whether a *brāhmaṇ,* a *mullā* or a *shaykh,* O Ravidās,
all arise from the same Flame.
The same One is the Creator of them all: know them all to be the same.

*Ravidās, Darshan, Pad 49, 51, 154, RD pp.52, 55, 155; cf. GRPS p.28*

In the time of the Buddha (*b.c.*553 BCE), the *brāhmaṇs* wielded considerable power, and Buddhist texts are replete with stories in which the Buddha and others hold dialogues with *brāhmaṇs.* Even so, the Buddha and later Buddhists often use the term to refer to a spiritual person, emphasizing that spirituality is not a matter of birth or social position. Buddha gave his teachings in a very simple and straightforward manner, understandable by all, and his pithy observations, recorded in the *Dhammapada,* reflect the social conditions of his times. In a long series of sayings, he describes the qualities that characterize a true *brāhmaṇ,* by which he means a truly spiritual person:

I do not call a man a *brāhmaṇ*
because of his birth or his mother.…
Him I call a *brāhmaṇ* who is free
from hindrances and attachments.…

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ*
whose lust, hatred, pride and hypocrisy
have fallen like a mustard seed from the point of a needle. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ*
who causes no hurt by body, mind, or word,
and is controlled in these three things. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ*
who is without hostility among the hostile,
who is peaceful among the violent,
who is unattached among the attached. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ*
who has no desire for this world or the next,
who is desireless and free. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ* who has cut all bonds,
who is fearless, who has passed beyond attachments,
who is unfettered. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ* who is meditative,
unblemished, balanced, whose work is done,
is free from impurity,
and who has attained the highest goal *(i.e. nirvāṇa)*. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ* who is deep in wisdom,
who has understanding,
who discerns the right way and the wrong,
and who has reached the highest goal. . . .

Him I call a *brāhmaṇ* who knows his previous lives,
who knows heaven and hell,
who has reached the end of birth and death,
who is a sage *(muni)* with perfect wisdom,
and who has done all that needs to be done.

*Dhammapada 26:14, 25, 9, 24, 28, 15, 4, 21, 41*

Other Buddhist texts reflect the same observations. A true *brāhmaṇ* is one who has risen above the storms of human passion and unrest:

Greed, I call a great flood – a whirlpool that sucks you down,
a constant yearning, seeking a hold, continually in movement:
Difficult to cross is the morass of sensual desire.

> Without deviation from Truth,
> a sage *(muni)* stands on high ground – a *brāhmaṇ.*
> Having renounced everything, he indeed is at peace;
> Having clearly understood, he indeed is wise;
> Knowing the *Dhamma* (the Way), he is independent;
> Moving rightly through the world, he envies no one here.
>
> *Sutta Nipāta 4:15, Attadaṇḍa Sutta, PTSN p.184; cf. KNJI, KNTB*

> How is a *bhikkhu* (monk) a *brāhmaṇ?* He has expelled evil and unwholesome states that defile . . . and lead to future birth, aging, and death. That is how a *bhikkhu* is a *brāhmaṇ.*
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 39, Mahā-Assapura Sutta, PTSM1 p.280; cf. MDBB p.370*

In places, a *brāhmaṇ* has even come to mean an enlightened one, one who has known the "ending of mental impurity", and "remains in an impurity-free" state.[9] He is one who has crossed the ocean of existence, and conquered the turmoil of his own mind:

> The mind is a person's ocean: its currents consist of mental events. One who withstands that current consisting of mental events is said to have crossed the ocean of mind with its waves, whirlpools, sharks, and demons. Crossed over, gone beyond, the *brāhmaṇ* stands on high ground.
>
> *Saṃyutta Nikāya 35:187, Samudda Sutta, PTSS4 p.157; cf. CDBB p.1226*

In a similarly constructed verse, the *brāhmaṇ* is also said to have withstood the currents of "form". He is therefore calm, tranquil, at peace within himself:

> Always, always, he sleeps at ease: the *brāhmaṇ* totally unbound.
> Unattracted to sensual pleasures, without acquisitions, always cool.
> Having cut all ties and subdued fear in the heart,
> tranquil, he sleeps at ease, having attained the peace of awareness.
>
> *Anguttara Nikāya 3:34, Hatthaka Sutta, PTSA1 p.138; cf. ANTB*

1. See "Jaina brahmin," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*
2. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 1:15, 3:7.60; Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 1:Introduction; Origen, *Contra Celsus* 1:24; Palladius, *Life of the Brahmans;* Jerome, *Letters* 53:1, 70:4, 107:8, *Against Jovinianus* 2:14.
3. Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1:2, 18, 2:27, 3:15, 8:7.4, *LAT1* pp.6–7, 48–49, 186–87, 256–57, *LAT2* pp.302–3.
4. See Strabo, *Geographika* 15:1.59–66, 70, *GSJ7* pp.98–117, 122–25; also J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature, AICL* pp.67–68, 76.

5. *E.g. Kaivalya Upanishad* 24; *Shāṭyāyanīya Upanishad* 28; *Vajrasūchikā Upanishad* 4.
6. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 2:1.1–14.
7. See also *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* 2:3.6, 3:9.26, 4:2.4, 4:5.15.
8. *Vajrasūchikā Upanishad* 1–8.
9. *Anguttara Nikāya* 4:35, *Vassakāra Sutta, PTSA2* p.37.

**Brahm ke bete** (Pu) *Lit.* knowers *(bete)* of *(ke) Brahm;* knowers of God, *Brahm* here referring to the supreme Lord; those who know God or have realized Him within themselves; perfect saints, as in a verse from Guru Amardās:

> They who realize God *(Brahm ke bete)* through the Word *(Shabd),*
> their caste-consciousness is obliterated.
>
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 67, AGG*

**brother**, **brethren** In religious and spiritual contexts, common terms of address among members of spiritual groups; a monk; occasionally, Jesus; sometimes used in gnostic texts, especially Manichaean, for the master or saviour.

Among Christians, Ephraim Syrus[1] and Teresa of Ávila[2] use the epithet for Jesus in a few places. In gnostic texts, the brother appears in the *Expository Treatise on the Soul,* as the saviour sent from God to rescue the soul. In the allegory, the soul is cast as a pure virgin who comes to this world, taking many lovers, none of whom satisfy, leading her to a state of despair. When the agony of this world becomes too much, God sends to her, the "Brother, the Firstborn", implying the first emanation of the Father, the Creative Word, who incarnated as a "Man" – a spiritual master. The Brother is also the "Bridegroom" and the soul the "bride":

> Then she will begin to rage at herself like a woman in labour, who writhes and rages in the hour of delivery.... So from heaven the Father sent her her Man, who is her Brother, the Firstborn. Then the Bridegroom came down to the bride.
>
> *On the Soul 132; cf. NHS21 pp.154–55*

The term is also used for one of the central players in the allegorical poem, the *Robe of Glory,* found in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas.* According to the narrative, a prince of royal parentage (the soul) is sent by his parents (the divine Source) on a quest into the creation, and down into the material world ("Egypt"). But his parents make a deal with him:

> If you go down into Egypt,
> and bring back from there the one pearl,

which is in the midst of the sea,
hard by the loud-breathing serpent,
then shall you again put on your bright robe,
and your toga, which is laid over it.
And with your brother, our next in rank,
you shall be heir in our kingdom.
*Robe of Glory 12–15, Acts of Thomas IX, in PSW p.189*

The "pearl" symbolizes the highest spiritual attainment, guarded by the "loud-breathing serpent" of the mind. The "brother" is again the master, an embodiment and personification of the Creative Word, "next in rank" to the parents who symbolize God.

The prince, however, having descended into the world of matter, gets completely lost, forgets his quest and his parentage, and finally falls fast asleep. The parents, therefore, not forgetting that they had promised to bring him home again, send him a letter:

And they wrote me a letter,
and every noble signed his name thereto:
"From your Father, the King of Kings,
and your Mother, the Mistress of the East,
and from your Brother, our next in rank,
to you our son, who is in Egypt, greeting!
Up and arise from your slumber,
and listen to the words of our letter!
Call to mind that you are a son of kings!
See the slavery – and whom you serve!

Remember the pearl,
for which you were sent to Egypt!
Think of your bright robe,
and remember your glorious toga,
which you shall put on as your adornment.
Your name is named in the Book of Life,
and with your Brother, whom you have received,
you shall return to our kingdom."
*Robe of Glory 40–48, Acts of Thomas IX, in PSW pp.190–91*

The story, of course, has a happy ending, with the prince ultimately returning to his long-lost home. Since the *Robe of Glory* is absent from some of the earlier manuscripts of the *Acts of Thomas,* it is generally regarded as a later insertion, possibly by the Manichaeans, who certainly used the term "brother" for the saviour or master.

In the Manichaean hymns, the saviour responds to the soul who has prayed for help to escape from the cycle of birth and death. He promises to lift the soul, and show it many wonderful things, including all the saviours that dwell with God, the "holy brethren":

> I shall reveal to you the holy brethren:
> the noble and the pure, who are filled with happiness.
> Forever shall you dwell joyfully among them all,
> beside all the jewels and the venerable gods.
> *Manichaean Hymns, Angād Rōshnān VI:70–71; cf. MHCP pp.152–53*

In another hymn, Jesus is specifically addressed as the brother, the bringer of salvation, beneficence, love, and healing for all the ills of the soul:

> You are the garment of blessing;
> You are the dearest brother;
> Come for salvation, you who are complete salvation;
> Come for beneficence, you who are complete beneficence;
> Come to bring love, you who are complete love;
> Come as physician, you who are complete healing.
> *Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.62ff., RMP bv; cf. GSR p.66*

The brother is also equated with all the *buddhas,* as saviour, son, and father of all souls ("light-natures"):

> You are naturally the merciful Son *(zǐ)* of the venerable Lord of Light,
> and also the able saviour *(jiù),*
> father of the light-natures (*míngxìng, i.e.* souls),
> the supreme elder brother *(xiōng)* of the many *buddhas (fó),*
> and also the wise, kind, and compassionate mother.
> *Mónǐjiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1271b17–18; cf. LSMH (44) p.179*

In the Manichaean Coptic translations of Mandaean texts, the "brethren" are bringers of the divine light to the destitute souls of this world:

> My brethren shall bring the Light.
> *Psalms of Thomas XIII, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.218*

In a similar vein, among the Mandaean prayers, the mythical saviour *Manda-ḍ-Hiia* ('*Gnōsis* of Life') is addressed as "Father, . . . Brother, . . . Son, . . . Source" and great "Root of Life":

> You have come! You come, and are ready to reveal yourself.
> You are immeasurable, infinite, and everlasting.

> You are the Father, you are the Brother, you are the Son;
> You are the Source, you are the great Root of Life.
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 75; cf. CPM p.76*

The metaphor also appears in ancient Egyptian love songs. In some instances, the use of chaste terminology – "brother" – suggests that the focus of these songs may not always have been a human but a spiritual beloved:

> The brother disturbs my heart with his voice:
> he causes a sickness to seize me.
> *Egyptian Love Songs, Beatty C1:8, LLSS p.178*

1. *E.g.* Ephraim Syrus, *Hymns* 6, 11, *HEDA* pp.239, 245.
2. *E.g.* Teresa of Ávila, *Soliloquies* 7, *CWT1* p.449; *Way of Perfection* 27, 28, 37, *CWTA2* pp.111, 115, 161.

**buddha** (S/Pa/H), **fó** (C), **butsu** (J) *Lit.* enlightened one, awakened one; an epithet of one who has reached enlightenment *(bodhi)* and gained liberation *(moksha)* from birth and death, according to the Buddhist ideal; one who has destroyed the four *āsravas* (the afflictions of becoming or birth, sensual craving or desire, incorrect understanding, and ignorance) and has attained *nirvāṇa;* from the Sanskrit root *budh* (to awaken); most commonly understood as the title given to Siddhārtha Gautama, but used frequently in Buddhist texts for any being who has attained enlightenment; the first awakened being in an era, according to the scheme of Buddhist cosmological time; also called *tathāgata* (thus come one), a term used especially by the Buddha of himself.

Although there is a range of opinions among scholars, it is probable that the historical Buddha lived in the fifth or sixth centuries BCE. His personal name was Siddhārtha, his clan name Gautama (Pa. Gotama), and he came from an ethnic group known as the *Shakyas.* Hence, he is also known as Gautama Buddha and Shākyamuni (sage of the *Shakyas*), the latter epithet being used especially in *Mahāyāna* texts. The Buddha taught a Middle Way that did not embrace the extreme asceticism of his times, as practised by traditions such as the *Ājīvikas,* and the path taught by his contemporary, the Jain *Tīrthankara,* Mahāvīra. In the Hindu tradition, the Buddha is regarded as one of the ten *avatāras* of the deity *Vishṇu.*

According to the traditional story, Siddhārtha was born into a high princely family in Lumbinī village, in the foothills of the Himalayas, north of the present Indian state of Bihar. He was the son of Shuddhodana, king of Kapilavastu, and Māyā, princess of Devadaha. At the age of sixteen, he was married to Yashodharā, a girl of noble birth.

It is said that the Buddha's father shielded his son from the true nature of life, but on venturing outside the protected environment of the palace, the

young prince encountered suffering in the forms of an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a renunciate. Although material wealth and power were at his disposal, he was so deeply moved by the sight of this suffering that, renouncing the comforts of princely life, he left his kingdom in search of lasting peace and the cessation of suffering. After six years of strenuous search and painful struggle, trying various ascetic practices, he finally adopted a more moderate regime that became known as the Middle Way and, in a state of deep meditation, he experienced enlightenment.

According to Buddhism, a *buddha* has fully awakened to the truth or reality underlying the four noble truths taught by Gautama Buddha. These are: that human life entails suffering; that the origin of suffering is craving or desire; that the cessation of suffering is possible; and that there is a Way (the noble eightfold path) by which this can be attained. All other beings are unawakened or spiritually asleep. One who has attained buddhahood without the help of a *guru* and who does not teach the *Dharma* (Way, Path) to others is known as a *pratyeka-buddha* (one who attains enlightenment for himself alone); he is regarded as somewhat inferior to a *samyak-saṃbuddha* (fully enlightened one). A *dhyāni buddha* is one of the many legendary and non-corporeal *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* in the Buddhist pantheon, whose images are visualized in meditation *(dhyāna).*

According to *Mahāyāna,* a *samyak-saṃbuddha* is omniscient *(sarvajña)* and possesses ten special powers *(dashabala). Buddhas* are distinguished from other enlightened beings, such as *arhats* (worthy ones), by having discovered enlightenment for themselves, rather than having been taught by another. There are variations in such details between the various Buddhist schools, but all agree that there have been many *buddhas,* and that there will be many more in the future. It is also said that there will never be more than one *buddha* in an era, Siddhārtha Buddha being the *buddha* of the present age. In the Pali canon, the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya,* mentions six previous *buddhas,* while the *Buddhavaṃsa* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* describes the life of the Buddha and the twenty-seven *buddhas* who came before him. *Mahāyāna* literature also contains numerous references to mythological *buddhas,* such as the five *jinas* (victors) mentioned in tantric literature.[1]

The inner state of consciousness of a *buddha* or of any enlightened being has always been of interest to spiritual seekers. The eleventh-century Tibetan Buddhist Gampopa observes that Buddhists have different views concerning the nature of the mystical experience of one who has attained the state of a *buddha.* Some say that a *buddha* has thoughts, as well as a transcendent awareness of everything. Others maintain that such panoramic awareness would disturb a *buddha'*s stream of consciousness; others suggest that the consciousness of a *buddha* is the epitome of emptiness and unity, so nothing at all can be present in his consciousness.[2] Such paradoxical, exhaustive and

convoluted speculations are typical of the complexity of Buddhist explanations regarding mystical experience.

The essence of a *buddha* is the *Dharma,* which is both the teaching and the path itself:

> The *Dharma* (C. *fǎ*) is held in the highest esteem by all the *tathāgatas.*
> Moreover, all the *buddhas* (C. *fó*) are begotten from the *Dharma,*
> through the perfecting of their conduct in accordance with it.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 40, Vows of Samantabhadra, T10 293:845a12, VBSC p.17*

The Buddha himself speaks of the *buddhas* in a general sense, referring to all enlightened beings. According to the *Dhammapada,* the *buddhas* teach "purification of the mind":

> Giving up all evil, doing good, purification of the mind:
> this is the teaching of the *buddhas.*
>
> *Dhammapada 14:5*

In this way, their disciples gain wisdom while still living in this world:

> Just as a fragrant, lovely lotus may grow
> upon a heap of rubbish cast by the wayside –
> So, among those as worthless as rubbish,
> does the disciple of the truly enlightened *buddha*
> outshine blind mortals in his wisdom.
>
> *Dhammapada 4:15–16*

A *buddha* shines with a spiritual glory:

> The sun shines by day, the moon is radiant by night;
> the warrior king shines in his armour,
> the *brāhmaṇ* shines in his meditation;
> But day and night, the *buddha* shines in radiance.
>
> *Dhammapada 26:5*

The world, he says, is blessed by the birth of the *buddhas:*

> Blessed is the birth of the *buddhas.*
>
> *Dhammapada 14:16*

In the *Theravāda* tradition, a *buddha* is a normal human being who has undergone a spiritual transformation, and reached the highest degree of spiritual enlightenment. The later *Mahāyāna* tradition, however, has developed

this understanding in a number of ways. In particular, a *buddha* is said to possess three bodies *(trikāya):* his physical, human form or transformation body *(nirmāṇa-kāya),* which manifests in this world to teach beings the path to enlightenment; his subtle or utter-delight body *(sambhoga-kāya),* a blissful form seen as the result and reward of spiritual practice; and his cosmic or all-inclusive form, the *dharmakāya* or *dharma* body (Truth or Reality body), which is one with everything, unmanifested, and free of all qualities, characteristics, and distinctions.

The physical form or *nirmāṇa-kāya* of the *buddha,* often referred to as the *tathāgata,* is believed to exhibit a number of characteristics and qualities, of which various lists exist in different *sūtras,* with some minor variations between them. A *buddha* is said to possess eighteen qualities expressing his inner perfection. He also bears the thirty-two physical marks *(dvātriṃshadvara-lakshaṇa)* of a great man *(mahāpurusha),*[3] drawn from earlier *brāhmaṇ* lore, together with eighty minor marks *(ashīti-anuvyañjana).* A *buddha* also has ten powers *(dashabala)* of penetrating awareness, four kinds of fearlessness, as well as supernatural powers *(ṛiddhis)* superior to those of other advanced beings.

Of the eighteen characteristics that express his inner perfection, the first six are associated with his outer behaviour: he moves gracefully and his conduct is never founded upon delusion of any kind; his speech is neither garrulous, loud, or ill-considered; he possesses an unfailing memory and intelligence; he is always composed and at peace; he is free of conceptual thinking, not clinging to ideas; he is diligent in all matters, free from indifference or carelessness.

The second six are associated with his inner spiritual realization: he gives unwavering attention to his work of spreading the message of the *Dharma* for the benefit of all beings; he is indefatigable, never losing his energy and vigour; he is always focused, mindful, and aware, seeing things for exactly what they are, never losing interest in his mission; he has unfailing wisdom, discernment, and understanding; he lives in a state of constant meditation *(samādhi, jhāna);* and he is permanently liberated.

The third six are associated with this state of consciousness and permanent meditative awareness: his deeds, his speech, and his mind are all informed and permeated by his state of constant meditation; as a consequence, whatever he does, says or thinks is meaningful. Likewise, his all-pervading awareness gives him an unobscured vision and wisdom concerning the past, the present, and the future; as a result, he knows everything.[4]

Some texts describe the thirty-two major marks *(dvātriṃshadvara-lakshaṇa)* of a perfectly enlightened *buddha.* These are entirely physical in nature, and include such things as tender hands and feet; a skin the colour of gold – pure, fair, and shining attractively; an upper body that is broad like that of a lion; a symmetrical body, whose outstretched arms equal his

height; a long and beautiful tongue that can reach every part of his face; a voice that has the sixty aspects of the melodious speech of the deity *Brahmā;* forty beautiful, completely white teeth of equal length and width, with no spaces between; and beautiful eyes, blue like a jewel, with black pupils, white eyeballs, a red hue in the corners, and irises blue on the periphery and yellow towards the centre.

In addition to these there are a further eighty minor signs *(ashīti-anuvyañjana).* These include perfect, shiny, copper-coloured nails on his hands and feet; round wide, and tapered fingers; veins not visible; a beautiful, upright and appealing walk like that of a lion, or an elephant, or a flying swan, and always like a leader; soft, beautiful, fragrant, well-ordered, and black hair; flawless eyes and vision; and so on. The Buddha's eyebrows, ears, nose, tongue, teeth, voice, hands, palms, main body characteristics, and waist are similarly perfect. And finally, his conduct in body, mind and speech is always pure; his behaviour is a delight to everyone; and he is attractive to all who see him. In a similar vein are the sixty aspects of a *buddha*'s speech, which is inspiring, appealing, articulate and without interruption, never rushed, calming, appropriate and relevant, logical, without flattery, without rigidity, of pure motivation, causes a state of bliss, dispels incorrect views, conveys understanding, amplifies qualities already attained and adds new ones, and is able to communicate any point by drawing on analogies from the material world.[5]

The ten powers *(dashabala)* of a *buddha* or *tathāgata* relate to his knowledge and wisdom. He knows, in his wisdom, according to the way things really are: the possible to be possible and the impossible to be impossible (some lists say the difference between right and wrong); the fruits of *karma,* past, present, and future; the different natures and dispositions of sentient beings, their higher and lower qualities, and their aspirations and different ways of understanding; the lower and the higher faculties of sentient beings; the world, with its manifold constituents; the various paths and practices, together with the consequences of following them and their different destinations *(e.g.* rebirth as a human being, a stay in a heavenly realm, enlightenment, *etc.);* the order and degree of the various meditative concentrations *(samādhis),* liberations, meditative absorptions *(jhānas),* and other such attainments; his many former lives; through the exercise of his divine eye, the death, the rebirth and the future lives of sentient beings, which happen according to the fruition of their actions *(karma);* and through the elimination of all defilements *(āsravas),* he knows the state of *nirvāṇa* and liberation *(moksha).*[6]

A *buddha* is also said to possess supreme compassion, the fruit of immeasurable virtue from previous lives, and four unparalleled forms of fearlessness *(chatvāri-vaishāradyāni).* In this context, fearlessness refers to the complete confidence in expounding the *Dharma* that arises from full realization of its truth. Possessing these four kinds of fearlessness, the Buddha "claims

the herd-leader's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and sets rolling the wheel of *Brahmā*". These four forms of fearlessness arise from: omniscience – complete certainty of the realization of enlightenment; purity of character – complete certainty that all impurities have been destroyed; absence of hindrances – complete certainty that all obstructions have been identified and removed; and the end of suffering – complete certainty that when a person practises according to the teaching of the *Dharma,* all suffering will ultimately be eliminated.[7]

A *buddha'*s supernatural or miraculous powers are founded upon his complete knowledge or gnosis of all things, a knowledge of things as they truly are.[8] They include the power to project himself simultaneously in many physical forms; to control material events and phenomena; to know the contents and potential of others' minds; to perceive directly all things in time and space; and to know the state of *nirvāṇa* and be able to communicate it to others.

Other texts add further qualities in their praise of the *buddhas.* A collection of *sūtras* known as the *Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra* present a vision of the *buddhas* as the all-knowing, all-powerful, spiritual masters of the universe – both material and heavenly. The *buddhas* are portrayed as uncreated, immortal and unlimited beings, one with each other, with all sentient beings, and with the entire universe, able to be anywhere and do anything, inside or outside of time and space. They are full and perfect knowers of the *buddha*-nature, the consciousness present within every living being, and equivalent to the *dharmakāya* (essence of Truth, body of Truth). In the *Shrīmālādevī Sūtra,* the *dharmakāya* is understood as the perfection of purity, eternity, bliss and Self *(Ātman),* a notion generally absent from Buddhist doctrine. The *Sūtra of Tens of a Tathāgata* lists three hundred qualities in groups of ten that relate to different aspects of a *buddha'*s being and existence, both human and spiritual.

Likewise, the related *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* devotes many pages to an extensively detailed and catalogued description of the "inconceivable qualities of the *buddhas*". This *sūtra* expounds at length the *buddhas'* teaching powers and dedication to their mission in this and all other worlds, whatever hardships they may have to undergo; their ability to travel instantaneously among the heavenly realms; their complete knowledge and understanding of all the worlds and of the minds and *karma* of all sentient beings; their supreme purity, compassion, and innumerable spiritual qualities; their full enlightenment; and their mastery of everything and supreme power to do anything they deem appropriate in any of the worlds. Firstly, the unlimited cosmic powers of the *buddhas* are described:

> All *buddhas (fó)* never miss the opportune moment to bring the spiritually mature to fruition; . . . to give *bodhisattvas (púsà)* foreknowledge of their destiny; . . . to manifest their spiritual powers *(shénlì)* according

> to the particular mental characteristics of living beings; . . . to manifest *buddha*-forms according to the particular understanding of living beings; . . . to exhibit great generosity; . . . to visit every town and village; . . . to receive those with pure faith; . . . to subjugate evil beings; . . . to reveal the unfathomable spiritual power *(shéntōng)* of the *buddhas.*
>
> All *buddhas* can be simultaneously in all the ten directions (north, south, east, west, northwest, northeast, southeast, southwest, up, and down); . . . can be simultaneously aware of all *buddhas* and all living beings of the past, present and future, without any disturbance to their minds; . . . are the same as and one with the *buddhas* of the past, present, and future.
>
> All *buddhas* are perfected in three kinds of mastery (diagnosis, prescription, and spiritual power) by which they can universally transform all living beings; . . . possess a great and impartial compassion, never giving up on any living being; . . . are perfected in deep meditation (S. *dhyāna*), able to observe all living beings at all times; . . . possess unlimited minds, able to abide in peace throughout the universe; . . . possess unlimited spiritual powers *(shénlì).* . . .
>
> All *buddhas* can reform all living beings, bringing happiness to them all; . . . can go anywhere in all the worlds to instruct and guide the myriad kinds of being; . . . possess complete knowledge of all things in all the worlds; . . . from their single, undivided (reality) body, can manifest as many bodies as are required to fill the universe; . . . have attained the four kinds of fearlessless and, being free from fear, utter the lion's roar at all assemblies. Unerring, clear and pure, they have thorough knowledge and perception of all existence.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:242c3–243b14*

There is no limit to what the *buddhas* will do to bring living beings to enlightenment, expecting nothing in return:

> All *buddhas* and world-honoured ones perform ten kinds of *buddha*-work in all the worlds, at all times. What are these ten?
>
> One, when a sentient being single-mindedly thinks of the *buddhas,* they appear before him.
>
> Two, when a sentient being's mind is uncontrolled, they explain the *Dharma* to him.
>
> Three, when a sentient being dedicates himself with pure faith, they shower him with immeasurable roots of goodness.
>
> Four, when a sentient being enters the realm of the *Dharma,* they permit him immediate inner realization and complete knowledge of everything.
>
> Five, they tirelessly teach and transform all sentient beings.

> Six, they travel freely, without impediment, throughout all *buddha*-lands.
>
> Seven, they have great compassion, never abandoning any sentient being.
>
> Eight, they appear, transform or manifest themselves in different forms, without ceasing.
>
> Nine, they exercise their spiritual powers *(shéntōng),* without ceasing.
>
> Ten, they dwell at peace in the realm of the *Dharma,* observing all things, everywhere.
>
> These are the ten *buddha*-works.... All *buddhas* appear in physical forms to perform the works of a *buddha* for living beings,... accept no offerings for doing the work of a *buddha* for living beings,... and do the work of a *buddha* for living beings, quietly, without a word.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:243c1–244a18*

The way they are, the manner in which they fulfil their mission, their powers, their perseverance and their compassion are unequalled:

> The great vows of all *buddhas* are firm and unbreakable. Unfailingly, they do what they say and mean what they say.... All *buddhas* will journey to untold realms to guide just a single sentient being. They do the same for all sentient beings, without ceasing. With great compassion, all *buddhas* observe all beings impartially and without judgment, whether they are faithful or sceptical. All *buddhas,* from their initial vows to their attainment of buddhahood, never regressed nor lost their determination for enlightenment.... All *buddhas* emanate boundless light, a light that illuminates all places, equally, bringing light to the *dharmas* (teachings) of all *buddhas.* They cleanse and purify the *bodhisattvas'* minds, filling them with a universal wisdom. Having no desire or attachment, all *buddhas* relinquish worldly pleasures. They vow that all worldly people be freed from suffering and attain bliss, entertaining no erroneous views. Out of compassion for sentient beings, all *buddhas* endure much suffering in order to safeguard the seed of buddhahood; dwelling in the state of buddhahood, they help sentient beings leave birth and death behind them, and reach the stage of the ten powers.
>
> All *buddhas,* being unlimited, can go to any realm,...can walk, stand, sit or lie down in any realm,...can expound the true *Dharma* in any realm,...can simultaneously observe the mental activity of all sentient beings and, using their three kinds of mastery (of diagnosis, prescription, and spiritual power), can teach, guide, and transform them.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:244a20–b17*

They are beings of light, able to manifest themselves wherever and whenever they wish:

> All *buddhas* emanate boundless rays of light, each ray of light being accompanied by an indescribable latticework of lights, universally illuminating all *buddha*-realms, eliminating darkness in all realms, revealing the manifestation of countless *buddhas,* their beings in all cases being equally pure and tranquil. Their *buddha*-works are all fruitful, lifting sentient beings to the stage of non-regression. . . . When the *buddhas* smile, their faces radiate innumerable rays of light, each ray of light possessing myriad, inconceivable colours, illuminating all the realms throughout the ten directions. They speak words of truth to immeasurable, countless and inconceivably many sentient beings, imparting instructions on the attainment of unsurpassed complete enlightenment.
>
> All *buddhas* are graced with infinite, eternal and transcendent lights, a treasury of light of indescribable colours of every kind, radiating infinite orbs of light, spreading unlimited effulgence throughout the ten directions. . . . All *buddhas* have boundlessly transcendent forms, lovely transcendent forms, clear and pure transcendent forms, transcendent forms that can be manifested at will, transcendent forms that outshine all other transcendent forms in all the three worlds (of desire, form, and formlessness), and supremely transcendent forms that can arrive at the other shore.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:244c5–c24*

They are a part of a cosmic family of *buddhas,* enlightened and perfect in every way:

> All *buddhas* are born into the same family of *buddhas,* past, present, and future. They accumulate a vast wealth of virtue. They are supremely pure and faultless; renouncing the world, they do not slander others. Among all sentient beings, they are graced with a supremely pure and sublime character. They have attained full and complete *buddha*-wisdom. . . . All *buddhas* are graced with the power of great compassion. They are supremely pure, without desire or longing. Always at peace while physically active, with great compassion, they never weary of rescuing worldly beings. They are the paramount fields of blessedness, the supreme givers. With great compassion, they help all sentient beings accumulate an unlimited treasure of virtue and wisdom.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:244c26–245a4*

They are masters of all the teachings known to human beings, and they know precisely how to get their message across. They know everything there is to be known:

> All *buddhas* have attained complete mastery of all *dharmas* (paths and teachings). They have thorough understanding of the intricacies of words and meanings. They are able to expound the *Dharma* eloquently, without difficulty.... The *buddhas* never miss an opportune moment to teach and transform all sentient beings. As appropriate to the sentient beings' state of mind, they expound the *Dharma* ceaselessly, in order to make them receptive.... Upon seeing a single sentient being become receptive to the teachings, so that he may attain eternal life, the *buddhas* persevere for unspeakable *kalpas* (ages) until the end of time; they sit tirelessly, single-mindedly, never becoming heedless or forgetful, guiding that being by appropriate means at the opportune time. And this they do for all sentient beings.
>
> The *buddhas* all... possess unlimited treasuries of Truth and immeasurable wisdom. They understand every kind of *dharma* (teaching) concerning this world and the next. They manifest immeasurable, sovereign spiritual power to guide and transform sentient beings in every realm....
>
> The *buddhas* all know that things are not as they are seen to be. Things are neither all one nor differentiated, neither measurable nor immeasurable; neither do they come and go. Things have no distinctive nature of their own, and one thing is no different from another. Those who possess *buddha*-wisdom can see the universal nature of everything. Independent of all things, they expound the *Dharma,* always dwelling at peace in the true nature of Suchness.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:245a8–246a3*

The *buddhas* dwell constantly in Reality. They are beyond the limitations of time and space, knowing everything, possessing power over everything:

> All *buddhas* know all times in one time. Rooted in pure goodness, they enter the supreme state without attachment. Time is universal to them, such that they neither linger in nor depart from days, months, years, *kalpas* (ages), creation, or dissolution.... They are constantly turning the wheel of the sublime *Dharma* (C. *fălún,* S. *dharmachakra*) for all sentient beings, never ceasing, never regressing, never resting....
>
> All *buddhas* remain constantly in the realm of the *Dharma.* They are immeasurably fearless. With their countless, limitless, endless, ceaseless, boundless, distinctive, inexhaustible and truthful rhetorical powers, they expound *dharmas* (teachings, explanations) to sentient

> beings in words and discourses suited and adapted to the nature of these sentient beings, and according to their inclinations and understanding. They use multitudes of methods to thoroughly explain goodness in its beginning, its middle, and its end, repeating it untold millions upon millions of times.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246a4–15*

They know that everything is essentially nameless and, as a result, they are never confused by human concepts:

> All *buddhas* remain in purity in the realm of the *Dharma.* They know that the origin of all things is namelessness. The past, the present and the future are nameless; all sentient beings are nameless; all inanimate beings are nameless; all lands and countries, . . . all non-lands and non-countries, . . . all *dharmas,* . . . all *non-dharmas,* . . . all virtues, . . . all non-virtues, . . . all *bodhisattvas,* . . . all *buddhas* – all are nameless. . . . All coming into being is nameless; all dissolution is nameless; all existence, . . . and all nonexistence is nameless; oneness is nameless; multiplicity is nameless, . . . because the nature of all things is inexpressible. Things have no direction or location. They cannot be described collectively or individually, as one or as many. No sound can express them; no word can describe them. Although the *buddhas* speak in a variety of ways according to conventional language, they seek no fame by doing so. It is by abandoning all false notions and by not making anything up that the *buddhas* reach the other shore.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246a16–26*

And ultimately, when their work is done, they enter *nirvāṇa:*

> All *buddhas,* each and every one of them, is pure, furnished with a hundredfold blessings. . . . All *buddhas,* after they have completed their work as a *buddha,* enter the final stage of *nirvāṇa* (C. *nièpán*).
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:245b29–c7*

The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* then elaborates the ten kinds of 'work' that are undertaken by the *buddhas* – in this world and other realms of the universe, material and heavenly. This elaboration differs somewhat from the earlier summary. In essence, although the *buddhas* possess supreme power and knowledge of everything, their entire mission and focus is always on bringing sentient beings to enlightenment and liberation:

> All *buddhas* and world-honoured ones have ten great *buddha*-works. They are limitless, boundless, and inconceivable. They cannot

> be understood by any heavenly or worldly being, or any disciple or self-enlightened one *(pratyeka-buddha)* of the past, present or future, except by the exalted spiritual power of a *tathāgata.* What are these ten?
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246b18–21*

Firstly, they take birth in the heavenly realms, helping the beings who dwell there to purify themselves and find salvation:

> All *buddhas* can manifest and take birth in any realm, in any world, or in any heaven. They teach practices that lead to enlightenment and perform great *buddha*-works in immeasurable forms, together with immeasurable virtue, immeasurable lights, immeasurable sounds, immeasurable rhetoric, immeasurable meditation *(samādhi),* and immeasurable wisdom. They travel to all realms to save all human beings, heavenly beings, demons, beings in the heavens of *Brahmā, shramaṇas* (holy men), *brāhmaṇs* (priests), and *asuras* (a kind of celestial demon). Their compassion is limitless and complete; they help and benefit all beings impartially by giving them birth in the heavens or as human beings, or by purifying their roots, or transforming their minds.... Without discrimination, they ferry all beings (across the ocean of transmigration to the shore of *nirvāṇa*), saving them from birth and death. This is the first great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246b22–c1*

Secondly, when they take human birth they remain fully aware of the illusion of material existence; and while here, they again help beings on the path to enlightenment:

> All *buddhas* descend from heaven to the mother's womb. Through perfect meditation *(samādhi),* they regard the changing phenomena of life as a fantasy, a dance, like smoke from a fire. They meet the events of life cheerfully, without restriction and without limitation....
>
> They perform the work of a *buddha* sometimes by spiritual power *(shénlì),* or by right mindfulness *(samyak-smṛiti),* or by manifesting supernatural powers *(shéntōng),* or by manifesting the light of wisdom, or by revealing the vast realms of the *buddhas,* or by emanating the immeasurable lights of the *buddhas,* or by entering countless profound meditations *(samādhi),* or by appearing in the meditation *(samādhi)* of others....
>
> When in the mother's womb, the *tathāgatas* do the work of a *buddha* in various manifested forms in order to benefit every living being in the world. They may appear as a new-born babe, or as a child, a

> prince, or a monk. They may reveal themselves as one who has attained enlightenment, or as one who is turning the sublime wheel of *Dharma,* or as one who is entering final extinction *(parinirvāṇa,* death, and *nirvāṇa).* In various ways and by these means *(fāngbiàn),* they do the work of a *buddha* in every realm, in every place, in every community or network, in every circle, and in every kind of situation, in all the worlds. This is the second great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246c2–16*

The third aspect of a *buddha*'s work is founded upon their essential purity and their boundless love and compassion:

> All the good works of all the *buddhas* are innately pure; all their wisdom is clean and bright. They take birth to guide the deluded, awakening them to the practice of goodness. For the benefit of sentient beings, they may take birth in a royal palace, but all *buddhas* are innately free from all material desire for palaces and their associated pleasures (*lit.* music girls, dancing girls). They remain untainted by craving. They clearly see the essential emptiness in all existence and the unreality of all pleasures. They uphold the pure precepts of the *buddhas* perfectly and completely. Their compassion becomes ever greater when they see the palace concubines and servants, or whenever they see sentient beings living in delusion and unreality. Their joy becomes ever greater when they observe that nothing in the world is pleasurable. With a free and independent mind, they develop complete detachment.
>
> Equipped with the merits and virtues of a *buddha,* they take birth in the material world. Their physical forms are perfect; their retinues are pure; and they have no attachment to anything. In ways that resonate with their hearers, they expound the teachings to sentient beings so that they may develop deep dissatisfaction with the world and engender in themselves the desire to abandon it. They point out to them the consequences of their actions, continually teaching and transforming them with expedient means *(fāngbiàn)* adapted to their response. They bring the (spiritually) immature to maturity, and the mature to salvation; and in doing the work of a *buddha,* they bring them to a stage from which they will not regress.
>
> Again, with immense compassion, they constantly expound a variety of *dharmas* to sentient beings. They employ three kinds of mastery (diagnosis, prescription, and spiritual power) in order to awaken them and purify their minds. Though they may live in a palace, seen by all, yet they perform the works of a *buddha* in all the worlds. With great wisdom and great energy, they inexhaustibly manifest the unlimited

> spiritual power *(shéntōng)* of a *buddha.* They always exhibit the three kinds of activity that are appropriate when teaching. These are complete purity of bodily activity, continuous inculcation of wisdom in the activity of speech, and profound, unlimited mental activity. These activities are used as expedient means to benefit sentient beings. This is the third great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246c17–247a8*

The fourth aspect of their work is that they become the source of spiritual wisdom for the world:

> By shining the light of great wisdom, they extinguish ignorance and darkness in the world. Becoming supreme fields of blessedness for all sentient beings, they continually praise the virtues of a *buddha.* They cause those sentient beings with the seeds of goodness planted in them by a *buddha* to see Truth with their eyes of wisdom. And they praise those who renounce worldly life, who remain pure and faultless in order to attain eternal liberation. They remain the epitome of wisdom in the world. This is the fourth great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:247a13–17*

Continuing in the same vein, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* goes on to depict omniscience as the "fifth great work of a *buddha*". The sixth is their turning of the "irreversible wheel of the *Dharma*" – a generalized way of describing the mission of a *buddha.* The "seventh great work of a *buddha*" is that the *buddhas* manifest themselves in a multitude of bodies throughout the universe, material and heavenly, according to the needs of the diverse sentient beings dwelling in those realms:

> All *buddhas* visit the capital cities and towns of every kind of king to perform the work of a *buddha* for sentient beings. These are the capitals of human kings, heavenly kings, serpent kings *(nāgarāja),* demon kings *(yaksharāja), gandharva* kings (celestial kings), *etc.* . . . and include all the cities and towns ruled by such kings.
>
> When they enter the gate of a city, the earth trembles and light shines everywhere. The blind regain their vision, the deaf regain their hearing, the insane regain their sanity, and the naked are clothed. Troubled and suffering beings all become happy and peaceful. Musical instruments all spontaneously begin to play without being played. And all adornments, whether decorated or not, emit beautiful music, bringing joy and happiness to all who hear them.
>
> Having extolled the virtues of a *buddha,* they travel simultaneously in multiple forms in all the ten directions, so that sentient beings

> everywhere may look upon and revere them, meditate and contemplate upon them, and serve and worship them. By having the roots of goodness planted in them and by receiving the grace and blessings of a *buddha,* they become certain of attaining buddhahood. In these ways, they perform the work of a *buddha,* sometimes by manifesting to sentient beings in a physical body, sometimes by making sublime utterances, sometimes just by smiling – by these means they create faith and happiness in them, and give them cause to revere and worship the *buddha.*... This is the seventh great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:247b12–c9*

The "eighth great work of a *buddha*" is that the *buddhas* do their work in whatever way they think will produce the desired results among sentient beings:

> All *buddhas* sometimes perform the work of a *buddha* while dwelling in a forest, or sometimes in a quiet place, or in a wilderness,... or in meditation (C. *sānmèi,* S. *samādhi*), or in a grove alone, or while concealed from view, or while dwelling in the wisdom of the Great Profundity, or in the transcendent realms of the *buddhas.*... Sometimes, they may do the work of a *buddha,* through the tireless use of expedient means *(fāngbiàn),* teaching sentient beings according to their inclinations and understanding. Or they may do the work of a *buddha* while apparently seeking *buddha*-wisdom in the form of a heavenly and celestial being *(nāga, yaksha, gandharva, etc.)*... or in a human or non-human form, or in the form of a disciple, as a self-enlightened one, or as a *bodhisattva.*... This is the eighth great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:247c10–29*

The "ninth great work of a *buddha*" lies in a *buddha's* ability to inspire sentient beings to follow and experience the spiritual path:

> All *buddhas* are hidden sources from which grow roots of goodness and purity. They induce all sentient beings to develop purity, faith and understanding of the *buddhadharma* (Way of the Buddha),... so that they become permanently detached from the world. They provide for all *bodhisattvas* to attain the light of wisdom by practising the way of enlightenment, and not by other methods. Sometimes, they do the work of a *buddha* by manifesting *nirvāṇa,*... or by making it clearly understood that everything in the world is transient,... or by explaining the nature of the *buddha*-bodies *(buddhakāya),*... or by explaining that what is being done has already been done,... or by explaining the nature of complete and flawless virtue and enlightenment,...

> or by explaining the permanent elimination of the roots of all existences.
>
> Or they do the work of a *buddha* by causing living beings to become dissatisfied with the world, desiring to turn away from it and to follow and submit to the *buddha*-mind, . . . or by pointing out that life is eventually going to end, . . . or by explaining that nothing in the world provides real enjoyment, . . . or by advocating service to the *buddhas* until the end of time, . . . or by explaining that all *buddhas* turn the pure wheel of *Dharma,* filling their hearers with great joy, . . . or by eulogizing buddhahood in order to inspire devotion to spiritual practice, . . . or by teaching concentration on remembrance of the Buddha, so that people may always delight in visions of the Buddha, . . . or by expounding the purification of the senses and diligent seeking with unflagging zeal on the path of the Buddha, . . . or by transforming the bodies of all beings into a *buddha*-body (community of disciples), causing all indolent and undisciplined sentient beings to live according to the pure precepts of the Tathāgata. This is the ninth great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:248a1–19*

The "tenth great work of a *buddha*" is the yearning created by the *buddhas* in the minds of sentient beings when the *buddhas* enter into their final *nirvāṇa* at their death:

> When *buddhas* die (enter *parinirvāṇa*), innumerable sentient beings lament and cry in great distress. They look at one another and say, "With great compassion did the Tathāgata, the World-Honoured One, mercifully help all worldly beings; he was a saviour and refuge for all living creatures. It is a rare thing to have encountered the manifestation of a *tathāgata.* Now the incomparable field of blessings has gone forever." Allowing sentient beings to lament and to yearn for the *buddha* in this manner is doing the work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:246a19–24*

The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* adds that this "tenth great work of a *buddha*" is further accomplished by the dismembering of their bodies in order to make countless relics and *stūpas,* which serve to remind people of the *buddha's* teachings:

> In order to transform and liberate all heavenly and celestial beings *(nāgas, yakshas, gandharvas, etc.)* . . . human and non-human, they dismember their own bodies into innumerable relics, . . . in order to inculcate purity and faith in the minds of sentient beings, so that they may honour, respect and joyfully worship the Buddha, and cultivate all virtues in order to reach the journey's end.

> And in the dwelling places of heavenly and celestial beings *(nāgas, yakshas, gandharvas, etc.)* . . . of human and non-human beings, they build monuments, adorned in various ways, for the purpose of worship. Their teeth, nails and hair are all used to build monuments, so that all those who see them may remember the Buddha, the *Dharma* (C. *fǎ*) and the community (C. *sēng,* S. *sangha*), honouring and reverencing them in order to help them maintain their conviction in the faith with joy, to give alms and service wherever they may be, and to cultivate the virtues; and so that, through the merit thus earned, they may take birth in the heavens or as a human being, amid kinsfolk of nobility and prosperity, having abundant property and a pure household; and so that they do not enter evil incarnations, but always dwell in good incarnations, where they can always see the *buddha* and live in a pure manner; and so that they can rapidly attain liberation from the three realms of existence, and follow the vehicle (path) of their own aspiration and reap its corresponding fruit. Recognizing the grace of the *tathāgata,* they repay with gratitude the favours they have received, dedicating themselves forever to the *buddhas* of the world. . . .
>
> Although the *buddhas* and world-honoured ones have died (entered *parinirvāṇa*), they still remain as fields of blessings for sentient beings – inconceivable, pure, boundless, virtuous, and without equal. They cause the roots of goodness and virtue of sentient beings to reach fulfilment. This is the tenth great work of a *buddha.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:248a24–b12*

Completing this description of the way in which a *buddha* goes about his mission, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* concludes:

> These works of a *buddha* are immense, limitless, and inconceivable. No sentient being in all the worlds, of the past, present or future, whether heavenly or human, or disciples or self-enlightened ones *(pratyeka-buddhas),* can attain enlightenment without the exalted empowerment of a *tathāgata.*
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 33, T10 279:248b13–14*

Summarizing some of these qualities in verse form, another book from the same text also says:

> The all-encompassing eye of a *tathāgata*'s wisdom body
> sees every particle in the world, without exception,
> simultaneously pervading throughout all the ten directions. . . .
> Every happy and peaceful thing in the world
> has its origins in the *buddha:*

The virtues of a *tathāgata* are supreme, incomparable. . . .
Recalling but a little of a *tathāgata*'s virtue,
focusing the mind upon it for but a single moment,
banishes all fear of evil ways. . . .

A *tathāgata*'s limitless light of wisdom
can destroy the net of ignorance and illusion,
saving all sentient beings in all worlds. . . .
The citadel of *Dharma* is infinitely vast:
varied and countless are its gates.
Manifesting in the world, a *tathāgata* opens them wide. . . .

The *dharmakāya* of all *buddhas* is one –
true Suchness, sameness, no distinction.
The *buddhas* permanently abide in this power. . . .
In the past, the Buddha saved beings in all realms,
radiating light through all the worlds,
training and teaching by various expedients. . . .
A *buddha* perceives all worlds
as supported by an ocean of *karma.*
He rains the rain of the *Dharma* everywhere upon it. . . .
The merits and virtues of a *tathāgata* are immeasurable –
boundless, they fill the universe.

*Avataṃsaka Sūtra 1, T10 279:9c2–3, 6–9, 13b10–19, 25c18–19*

Stemming from a belief originating in the older *Theravāda* tradition, it is commonly said that there cannot be two *buddhas* living at the same time in a single 'world system', understood according to the Indian cosmogonical system of the times. According to this system, each world consists of a Mount Meru, in the midst of seven oceans, separated from each other by seven ring-shaped mountain ranges. Outside of these are four continents and eight subcontinents. Our human world is the southernmost continent, *Jambudvīpa.* The entire world is encompassed by an eighth mountain range, the outer iron mountains. A thousand such worlds comprise a thousandfold world system; a thousand of these comprise a second-order thousandfold world system; and a thousand of these comprise a third-order world system (a trichiliocosm), which thus contains a billion worlds. It is a trichiliocosm, regarded as a single world system, which is said to contain only one *buddha* at a time. It should be added that the number of worlds within a world-system can vary from text to text. The total number of worlds and world-systems is understood to be infinite. Mythological though this description may be, it is interesting to note that modern astronomy estimates that there are 500 billion galaxies each containing 300 billion stars, which from a human perspective is close enough to infinite.

In one *Theravāda* text, the Buddhist seeker King Milinda asks the Buddhist scholar Nāgasena why there can be only one fully enlightened *buddha* in each world system:

> KING MILINDA: The Lord, Nāgasena, has said: "It is impossible, O monks, it cannot be, that in one single world system two fully enlightened *buddhas* should simultaneously appear – that is quite impossible." But, Nāgasena, all the *tathāgatas* always teach the same thirty-seven *dharmas,* which act as wings to enlightenment; they explain the same four holy truths; they train in the same three kinds of training (morality, meditation, and wisdom); and they all admonish us to practise vigilance. If all *tathāgatas* have one and the same teaching, doctrine, training and instruction, for what reason should two *tathāgatas* not appear at the same moment? The appearance of even one *buddha* already lights up this world. If there were still a second one, the splendour emanating from the two would light up the world still more. And also two *tathāgatas* could instruct with much more ease, could admonish with much more ease! Tell me therefore the reason for this saying of the Lord, so that my doubts may be dispelled!
>
> NĀGASENA: This world system of ten thousand worlds can bear just one single *buddha,* can bear the virtue of just one single *tathāgata.* If a second *tathāgata* were to arise, this world system of ten thousand worlds could not bear him. It would shake and tremble, bend, twist, and disintegrate; be shattered, ruined, and destroyed. It is just as with a boat which can carry one man only. When one man has got into it, it remains steady above the water. But if a second man should come along, as large and weighty as the first one, and also get into it, would then that boat be able to carry both of them?'
>
> KING MILINDA: Certainly not. . . .
>
> NĀGASENA: Just the same would happen with this world system if a second *tathāgata* were to appear. . . . There are three further reasons why it would be unsuitable for two fully enlightened *buddhas* to appear at the same moment: (1) For if they did, disputes might arise between their respective followers, and arguments about 'our *buddha*' and 'your *buddha*' would lead to the formation of two rival factions, just as it happens with the followers of two powerful ministers. (2) Moreover, the simultaneous appearance of two fully enlightened *buddhas* would falsify the well-known scriptural passage which describes the *buddha* as the foremost, supreme, the best, the most eminent, the utmost, the most excellent, unequalled, without an equal, matchless, without a counterpart or rival. (3) And finally, this is a natural attribute of *buddhas* that only one *buddha*

at a time appears in the world. For what reason? Because of the greatness of the qualities of the all-knowing *buddhas.* Of other things also which are great in the world, there is in each case one only to be found. There is one great earth only, one great ocean, one great world-mountain Sineru (S. Sumeru), one great space, one great *Sakka* (S. *Shakra,* king of the gods; *aka. Indra*), one great *Māra,* one great *Mahābrahmā.* A *tathāgata, arhat,* or fully enlightened *buddha* is great, and so there is only one in the world. Wherever any of these arise, there is no room for a second. And so also with the *tathāgata.*

KING MILINDA: Well said, Nāgasena. So it is, and so I accept it.

*Questions of King Milinda (52) 4:6.4–5, 7–9, PTSQ pp.236–37, 239; cf. in BSEC pp.211–12, SBE36 pp.47–51*

The *Mahāyāna* school points out, however, that other *buddhas* can exist in other world systems. Here, an adherent of the *Sarvāstivāda* school of early Buddhism is in conversation with a *Mahāyāna* teacher:

SARVĀSTIVĀDIN: The Buddha has said: 'Two *buddhas* cannot simultaneously arise in one and the same world system, no more than two universal monarchs can co-exist at the same time'. It is therefore untrue to say that at present there are other *buddhas* apart from Shākyamuni.

MAHAYANIST: These are certainly the Buddha's words, but you do not understand their meaning. The Buddha wants to say that two *buddhas* cannot appear simultaneously in one and the same great trichiliocosm. But he does not exclude this possibility for the whole universe extending in all the ten directions. Two universal monarchs cannot appear together in the same four-continent world system, because each would brook no rival. And so in one four-continent world system, there is only one single universal monarch. Just so with a *buddha* and a great trichiliocosm. The *sūtra* here draws an analogy between *buddhas* and universal monarchs. If you believe, as you do, that in other four-continent world systems there are other universal monarchs, why do you not believe in the existence of other *buddhas* in other great trichiliocosms?

Moreover, one *buddha* alone cannot possibly save all beings. There must therefore also be others. In fact, beings are countless and their sufferings are measureless. Countless *buddhas* are therefore necessary to lead them to salvation.

SARVĀSTIVĀDIN: The *sūtra* says that *buddhas* appear as rarely as a flower on the *uḍumbara* tree, one only from age to age, with immense intervals between. If the ten directions were full of

*buddhas,* then the occurrence of a *buddha* would not be a rare event, one could find one easily, and could not say that *buddhas* are exceedingly difficult to meet.

MAHAYANIST: It is true that in one great trichiliocosm the *buddhas* follow each other at great intervals. But there is nothing here about the whole universe. The *buddhas* are so difficult to meet because imperfect people do not know how to honour them and are lax in searching for the Way. Many of them, in addition, fall into the states of woe as a result of their evil deeds, and there, for aeons on end, they never see a *buddha,* or hear one mentioned. It is because of the imperfection of men's hearts that the appearance of *buddhas* is said to be rare.

SARVĀSTIVĀDIN: If there actually were in the ten directions countless *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas,* why do they not come and save beings from sin and suffering?

MAHAYANIST: For countless aeons these beings have heaped up sins and faults. It may be that they have also gained some merit, but that is often insufficient for them to see a *buddha.* That is why they cannot see them.

*Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 93b–c; cf. in BSEC pp.212–14*

All *buddhas* are said to teach the same path, and the *Mahāyāna* text, the *Lotus Sūtra,* adds a further dimension to the understanding of the *buddha* as the perpetual saviour. The real *buddha,* it explains, is a cosmic power that is forever devoted to the salvation of sentient beings. He appears to be born and to die only for the benefit of the beings in whichever world he manifests. In fact, whether visible or not, he is always going about his business of salvation.

The eternal ministry of the *buddhas* is illustrated by a story related in the *Lotus Sūtra.* The Buddha has just entered a state of deep meditation *(samādhi)* when a ray of light illuminating the entire universe emanates from between his eyebrows. Bodhisattva Mañjushrī explains, on the basis of his experience of the same phenomenon in a past era, that this indicates that the Buddha is about to preach the *Dharma* doctrine of the *Lotus Sūtra,* after which he will enter *nirvāṇa.* Sure enough, emerging from his meditation, the Buddha explains to his listeners that only one way leads to enlightenment and liberation, and that the sole purpose of every *buddha* who comes to this world is to teach this truth and to guide seekers on the path. The disciple (*shrāvaka,* hearer) who seeks to become an *arhat* (worthy one) by listening to the Buddha's teachings and by comprehending the four noble truths – and even the practitioner who has attained enlightenment by himself *(pratyeka-buddha)* through understanding the law of causation and realizing the state of *anātman* (absence of individuality or ego) – can only go up to a state of temporary *nirvāṇa* or rest *(vishrāma).* He must make further efforts in future

existences to acquire the excellences prescribed for the *bodhisattva,* who aims at the ultimate salvation of others besides himself, and to attain the goal of true buddhahood. Only upon realization of *dharma-shūnyatā* (emptiness, nonexistence of phenomenal objects) and *dharma-samatā* (sameness of all objects) will the veil covering the Truth be lifted. There is thus only one path or vehicle *(ekayāna)* to buddhahood and, to help men traverse it, the Buddha keeps on reincarnating – as do the disciples, until they attain the real *nirvāṇa.* The *Lotus Sūtra* also refers to the Buddha's career as a *buddha* in past eras, as also to *bodhisattvas* who later became *buddhas.* Prophecies are also made regarding the future attainment of buddhahood by various beings.

During the discourse, vast numbers of *bodhisattvas* arrive from throughout the universe to pay homage to the Buddha and to receive his mandate to disseminate the *Dharma.* The Buddha explains to the assembled multitude that he has appointed an inconceivable number of *bodhisattvas.* Maitreya asks the Buddha how he could have gathered so many together in the short span of his ministry, and the Buddha replies that common notions are not applicable to his lifespan, which is limitless. He assumes various forms in different ages, but always with the same purpose – for the enlightenment and liberation of human beings.

To illustrate his method, he relates a parable.[9] A wise physician, skilled in the preparation of herbal medicines, who has been away from home on business, returns to find his many sons ("ten, or twenty, or even a hundred") writhing in agony, pain and confusion because they have drunk some poisonous preparation, as a result of which some of whom have lost their sanity. He therefore prepares an appropriate herbal remedy for them all, saying, "Take these highly effective herbs, colourful, fragrant and tasty, perfect in every way; then shall you be quickly rid of your suffering and agony, and shall never again be subject to this illness." Those of his sons who have not lost their sanity, seeing the appealing colour and fragrance of the remedy, immediately take the medicine, and are relieved of their suffering. The others, however, who have lost their sanity, although overjoyed to see their father, refuse to take the medicine, and continue to suffer because the poison has penetrated so deeply into their minds that they do not perceive the medicine to be the remedy for their condition. ("Their thoughts, having been affected by poison, are all topsy-turvy"). The physician therefore takes pity on them, and devises an expedient. Once again commending his medicine to them and assuring them of its efficacy, he goes away to another land, where he spreads the rumour that he has died due to old age. His absence awakens longing in his ailing sons for their father and, shocked back to their senses, they too take the medicine and are cured. The father then returns, enabling all to see that he is well.

The Buddha points out that he is like the physician, that his sons are human beings who have drunk the poison of desire and worldliness, and that his

*nirvāṇa* and his leaving this world are but a show. He has been coming to this world for countless ages, and will continue to do so. In fact, he is always here:

> Since I attained buddhahood,
> the number of *kalpas* (ages) that have passed
> is an incalculable hundreds, thousands,
> ten thousands, millions, trillions myriads.
> Constantly, for incalculable *kalpas,* I have been preaching the *Dharma,*
> teaching and converting countless millions of living beings,
> causing them to enter upon the *buddha* Way.
>
> For the sake of these living beings, and as an expedient device,
> I make a show of entering *nirvāṇa;*
> Yet in fact I do not pass into extinction (death),
> but am always here, preaching the *Dharma.*
>
> *Lotus Sūtra 16, T9 262:43b12–17; cf. LBFD p.242*

He then relates the parable of the physician, explaining:

> When I observe living beings,
> I see them drowned in a sea of suffering;
> That is why I do not manifest myself to them,
> but rather cause them to look up in thirst.
> Only when their minds are filled with longing
> do I appear and preach the *Dharma* to them.
>
> *Lotus Sūtra 16, T9 262:43c1–3; cf. LBFD p.243*

He then emphasizes that his death is only an appearance, staged because human beings would otherwise cling complacently to their egos, to their desires, and thus to the material world. To save them, he must keep on seeming to appear and disappear – to be born and to die, seeming to enter into *parinirvāṇa,* the final after-death *nirvāṇa* of one who has attained *nirvāṇa* during his lifetime:

> As a physician who uses an expedient means to heal his sons gone mad,
> gives out that he is dead, although in fact he lives –
> yet none can say he speaks a falsehood –
> So, too, do I, as father of the world
> and saviour from suffering and affliction,
> because of the befuddlement of ordinary human beings,
> give out, though yet I live,
> that I have entered into extinction *(i.e. parinirvāṇa).*

For if they see me constantly,
arrogance and selfishness will arise in their minds,
and abandoning restraint they will give themselves up
to the five desires, and fall into evil destinies.

While always aware of those living beings
who follow the way and those who do not,
in response to their need for salvation,
I preach various doctrines to them, forever thinking:
"How may I cause the living beings
to gain entry to the unequalled Way,
and quickly acquire the *buddhadharma?*"

*Lotus Sūtra 16, T9 262:43c24–44a4; cf. LBFD p.244*

By design, therefore, a true *buddha* is very hard for sentient beings both to find and to recognize:

The *buddhas* are very hard to find –
you meet one once in a million *kalpas.*

*Lotus Sūtra 1, T9 262:5a13; cf. LBFD p.19*

The multitude of *buddhas* is again emphasized in a story related in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra.* According to the story, the householder Veshṭhila reveals that in his meditation, he has a repeated vision of the millions of *buddhas* and the paths they have taken to reach enlightenment. Veshṭhila is speaking to the seeker Sudhana, as one of fifty-three teachers Sudhana meets on his journey to enlightenment:

When I enter into this meditation *(sānmèi,* S. *samādhi),* all the *buddhas (fó)* of this realm appear before me, one after another. . . . Through the continuum of vision (consciousness) shared by the *buddhas,* in one moment of thought, I am simultaneously aware of a hundred *buddhas,* a thousand *buddhas,* a hundred thousand *buddhas,* a hundred million *buddhas,* a hundred thousand million, a hundred thousand billion, a hundred thousand trillion *buddhas. Buddhas* from realms as numerous as there are tiny specks of dust in a *buddha*-land, appear before me, one after another. I also become aware of the paths trodden by all these *buddhas* – how they took their initial vows, planted the roots of goodness, attained supernatural power *(shéntōng), etc.* . . . I can also clearly recall their teachings, consider them mindfully, and understand all their ramifications.

*Avataṃsaka Sūtra 39, T10 279:366b9–21*

Veshṭhila goes on to describe his vision of how this multitude of *buddhas* attained enlightenment – through their initial aspiration, their resulting reorientation towards the spiritual life, their purity of purpose, their spiritual practices, their attainment of human virtues, their experience of the inner *buddha*-lands, and eventually their perfect enlightenment, followed by their auras of light, their manifestation of the miraculous powers that characterize the *buddhas,* and their teaching activities:

> I also have full knowledge of all the future *buddhas (fó)* beginning with Maitreya (Mílèfó), and all the present *buddhas,* beginning with Vairochana. I also have full knowledge of all the *buddhas* of the past, present and future, and of all disciples, all self-enlightened ones *(pratyeka-buddhas),* and of all *bodhisattvas* in all realms throughout all the ten directions.
>
> I have only attained what *bodhisattvas* have attained, and that is liberation at the stage of non-final extinction *(aparinirvāṇa).* How then can I know or tell you of the practices and virtues of the *bodhisattva-mahāsattvas* (great-being *bodhisattvas*) who have attained simultaneous wisdom of the past, present, and future? They enter into meditation (C. *sānmèi,* S. *samādhi*) in a moment of thought. Their minds are immersed in light from the eternal sun of *tathāgata* wisdom. Impartial to all things, they know that all *buddhas* are universal; that a *tathāgata,* oneself, and all sentient beings are all one and the same; and that the original nature of all things is purity and clarity. . . . They enter all realms impartially, making no distinction. Dwelling unwaveringly on the seal of the *buddhadharma,* they thoroughly expound the *Dharma* to all sentient beings.
>
> South of here is a mountain known as Potalaka ('Brilliance'), where a *bodhisattva* named Avalokiteshvara lives. Pay him a visit and ask him how to learn and perform *bodhisattva* practices.
>
> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra 39, T10 279:366b21–c5*

And so Sudhana is passed on to his next teacher, and continues his quest.

As various Buddhist texts point out, *buddhas* may come in any guise, not necessarily taking birth into a Buddhist community. One who teaches the true *Dharma* is a true *buddha,* and he or she can be born in any environment. He will give his teachings according to the religion, culture and mental tendencies of those around him. Thus, long after the time of the historical Buddha, the third-century (CE) Iranian mystic Mānī taught that the Buddha, in his own day, had been a true saviour, taking souls back to God. Contrary to Buddhist beliefs concerning the extreme rarity of the *buddhas,* he also taught that Zarathushtra, Jesus and others, including himself, had all been perfect saviours.[10] Mānī and his successors had a following that stretched from China

to Rome, some of whom were born into a Buddhist culture. Hence, some of the Manichaean texts speak of saviours as *buddhas* or *buddhas* of light. In the Manichaean manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan, speaking of the divine creative power as the Tree of Life, the unknown writer says:

> All the *buddhas (fó)* come from its flowers:
> all wisdom and kindness grow from its fruits.
> *Mónífiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1270c3, LSMH (8) p.176*

And of the saint, he says:

> He is also . . . the initiator, guide, and support:
> all the original forms and manifestations of the *buddhas (fó).*
> *Mónífiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1270c19–20; cf. LSMH (16) p.177*

He also offers a prayer to God, to the creative power ('Breath', 'Law') and to all saviours – the "*buddhas* of light". The "Law *(fă)*", here, which the writer identifies as the divine source of the saviour or *buddha,* is the Buddhist *Dharma:*

> I now most devoutly offer my universal praises to you –
> compassionate father, Son of Light *(míngzĭ),*
> Breath of the pure Law *(fă),*
> and all manifestations of the good Law *(fă).*
> All you *buddhas* of light *(guāngmíng fó)* –
> pray, each of you, be merciful and receive my petition:
> Lead me to the gate of emancipation to be free of tortures,
> and let me quickly reach the world of constant light.
> *Mónífiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1273c16–19; cf. LSMH (146–47) p.189*

See also: **Jesus Buddha**, **Maitreya**, **Mānī Buddha**, **tathāgata**.

1. See "Buddha," *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism, ODB.*
2. See Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 20:117b–118a, *JOLG* p.257, *JOLK* p.282.
3. *E.g. Dīgha Nikāya* 3 *(Ambaṭṭha Sutta),* 4 *(Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta),* 14 *(Mahāpadāna Sutta),* 30 *(Lakkhaṇa Sutta), PTSD1* pp.88, 105–9, 116, *PTSD2* pp.16–19, *PTSD3* pp.142–79.
4. See Garma Chang, *Buddhist Teaching of Totality, BTOT* pp.54–55 (n.27); Khenpo Chöga, *Drops of Nectar* 56–61, *DNK1* pp.322–23; *Ratnagotra-vibhāga* 3:15.3.9–15, *SRVU* pp.341–42.
5. See Khenpo Choga, on Khenpo Kunpal, on *Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra* 51–60, *DNK1* pp.307–16.

6. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 12, *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta, PTSM1* pp.69–71.
7. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 12, *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta, PTSM1* pp.71–72.
8. *E.g. Majjhima Nikāya* 1, *Mūlapariyāya Sutta, PTSM1* p.4.
9. *Lotus Sūtra* 16, *T9* 262:43a9–43b10; *cf. LBFD* pp.240–41.
10. Mānī, *Shāhburkān,* in al-Bīrūnī, *Chronology of Ancient Nations* 207; *cf. CAN* p.190.

**Buddha of Light** (C. *guāngfó*) A common designation in Chinese Manichaean texts of the third-century Iranian mystic Mānī, commonly known as the Messenger, Apostle or Envoy of Light. In Buddhist lands, Mānī was regarded as Maitreya, the awaited *bodhisattva* who will be the next *buddha.*[1] Employing a similar epithet, Buddhist *Mahāyāna* texts depict the *bodhisattva* credited with establishing the Pure Land form of Buddhism as Amitābha Buddha ('Buddha of Infinite Light') or Amitāyus Buddha ('Buddha of Infinite Life').

See also: **envoy**, **messenger**.

1. *E.g. Manichaean Text, MM3* p.880; *cf. MLRE* pp.210–11.

**buzurg** (P) (pl. *buzurgān*) *Lit.* grand, great; also, one who is great; an eminent and generous man, a nobleman, an important person, a venerable personage, an elder; hence, *buzurgī* (greatness); in Sufism, a saint or master.

According to ʿInāyat Khān, Sufis speak of seven degrees of spiritual teacher: *pīr* or *murshid, buzurg, walī, ghawth, quṭb, nabī,* and *rasūl,*[1] although these terms are used differently by different Sufis.

1. ʿInāyat Khān, *Sufi Message, SMIK9* p.128.

**Cathari**, **Cathars** *Lit.* pure ones, from the Greek *katharos* (pure); a collective name given to the many groups of medieval gnostics who flourished in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, finally dying out in the fifteenth century. They included or were closely affiliated to the Paterins of Italy, the Albigensians of southern France, the Paulicians of Armenia, and the Bogomils of Bulgaria. Keeping company with them were other esoteric groups including the Knights Templar, the Troubadours of southern Europe, the Rosicrucians, the Hermetic philosophers, the Alchemists, and probably the Jewish kabbalists and Islamic gnostic groups such as the Ishmaelis, and followers of the mystical side of Islam, the Sufis.

The beliefs of the Cathars were generally linked to those of the Manichaeans but, due to the destruction of their literature during various periods of

persecution, and with the passage of time, their precise teachings are now uncertain. The little that remains has been incompletely transmitted, and that almost entirely by their unsympathetic opponents. Even so, it is likely that the Manichaean belief in reincarnation and transmigration was also held by the Cathars. It is also said that the Cathars were essentially dualistic, believing the world to be inherently evil and eternally separate from the Divine. The image conjured up by a literal application of this belief to daily life, however, seems at odds with the advanced social organization, including education and a place in society for women, that are known to have been characteristic of the Albigensians of southern France. It seems more likely that whatever their beliefs and mythologies concerning the origins of the world, its attractions were perceived as a major hindrance to spiritual evolution, as in other spiritual traditions, and were in that sense considered evil. But that does not seem to have prevented the Cathars from making the best of life while in this world. It is everyday details such as these that are missing from any later understanding of how the Cathars lived their lives.

Likewise, the commonly reported belief in the celibacy of all followers seems unlikely, at least for the majority, since the growth of the Cathar community will have been greatly helped by the development of Cathar families. Such reports have perhaps been promulgated in order to make the entire belief system seem repellant to normal, sexually active human beings. It may be presumed, however, that – in common with most spiritual traditions – control of the sex urge was deemed advantageous to the life of the spirit.

The Cathars entertained serious reservations concerning the Old Testament, some rejecting it altogether. Reflecting their dualist beliefs, their creation mythology differed radically from the standard Christian dogma based on *Genesis.* They also rejected the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, and were critical of the worldliness and corruption of the Catholic Church.

The popularity of Catharism among the common people was enhanced by the formation of a two-tier system. Not unlike the monastic tradition in Christianity, the *'perfecti'* or the elect, having undergone an initiation, devoted themselves to contemplation, and adhered to a more rigorous moral discipline than regular believers.

The Cathars first appeared in the first half of the eleventh century in western Germany, northern Italy, and the medieval principality of Flanders (now northwest Belgium, and neighbouring areas of France and the Netherlands). Nothing was then heard of them until the twelfth century. From around 1140, the Cathars became an organized religion, establishing eleven bishoprics: one in northern France, four in the south, and six in Italy. This growth coincided with a reorganization of the Bogomil Church, which was active in spreading its teachings at that time. In 1147, the Bogomil bishop, Nicetas, visited some of the newly founded Cathar communities. At the same time, men were also returning from the Second Crusade (1147–1149), some of

whom brought with them new-found beliefs in the ancient gnostic stream of Christianity.

The Cathars became a serious threat to the Catholic Church, which, in the 'Albigensian Crusade' during the first half of the twelfth century, resorted to extreme violence to extirpate the 'heretics'. Many of the surviving French Cathars fled to Italy where persecution was less intense. The ongoing activities of the nascent Inquisition forced the movement further underground, with the last remnants lingering on until the fifteenth century.[1]

See also: **Albigenses**, **Bogomils**.

1. Historical details drawn from "Cathari," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2001).

**chaityavāsin**, **chaityavāsī** (S) *Lit.* temple *(chaitya)* dweller *(vāsī);* a former name for a Jain mendicant monk who was resident in a temple or temple complex such as a monastery *(maṭha)* or other dwelling; a sedentary or domesticated Jain monk. The practice is of uncertain history, although it was known as early as the eleventh century, when discussions are mentioned between *chaityavāsīs* and *vanavāsīs* (forest dwellers, itinerant monks). Although at odds with the itinerant and possessionless lifestyle laid down for mendicants in Jain scriptures, *chaityavāsīs* performed a useful role as custodians and administrators of temples and associated property, and in looking after temple libraries. Some *chaityavāsīs* even owned property and earned money from their performance of temple rites for the laity, often with a magical or tantric bias. They slept in beds, and did not take the full mendicant vows or perform the six obligatory rites *(āvashyakas).*

Periodic efforts at reform in medieval times met with little success. Reformers would leave their *gachchha* (family, order) and start a new one on more stringent and orthodox lines. But the old schools and their *chaityavāsīs* continued to flourish and, in course of time, the new *gachchhas* would fall into the same decline, once again prompting reform. As a result, the number of *gachchhas* proliferated; tradition suggests that in medieval times there were as many as eighty-four, of which only a few remain. Since then, domesticated monks in the *Shvetāmbara Mūrtipūjaka* (image worshipper) tradition, of which there were once a large number, have been known as *yatis* (ascetics). Like their predecessors, they lived a comfortable lifestyle and did not take the full mendicant vows.[1] By the start of the twentieth century, the majority of *Mūrtipūjaka* monks were temple-dwelling *yatis,* although in present times, only a few remain.

See also: **gachchha** (7.5), **yati**.

1. See "caityavāsī," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**chakravartin**, **chakravartī** (S), **cakkavattin**, **cakkavattī** (Pa), **zhuǎnlún** (C), **tenrin** (J) *Lit.* wheel *(chakra)* turning *(vartin);* rolling everywhere without obstruction; in Hindu, Jain and Buddhist mythology, a wise and benevolent king or emperor who rules the entire world, or at least an extensive territory, such a reign being known as a *sārvabhaumā* (entire world).

Several symbolic interpretations of the wheel are given. The universal rule of the *chakravartin* is symbolized by the unobstructed turning of his chariot wheels throughout his empire. He is the undisputed ruler, able to travel wherever he wishes without any let or hindrance. In a Hindu and especially a Buddhist context, he is also said to keep the *dharmachakra* (wheel of the Law, wheel of the Buddhist teachings) moving – *i.e.* he promotes and maintains spiritual and religious principles as the basis of his rule.

In a Buddhist version of the myth, the *chakravartin* rules by turning a wheel of divine attributes bestowed upon him by heaven at the time of his coronation. This wheel rolls unhindered and unchallenged over his kingdom, its continuous forward movement symbolizing his continuous conquests. According to the *Abhidharmakosha Bhāshya* of Vasubandhu (*c.*C4th CE), there are four grades of *chakravartin,* distinguished by the material from which this wheel is made – gold, silver, copper, or iron. A *chakravartin* with a golden wheel rules all the four islands or continents *(dvīpas)* of Indian cosmography; the *chakravartin* with a silver wheel rules the eastern, western, and southern *dvīpas;* the *chakravartin* with a copper wheel rules the eastern and southern *dvīpas;* and the *chakravartin* with an iron wheel rules only the southern *Jambudvīpa.* The *chakravartin* with the iron wheel is the only one who uses violence to create his empire, yet he still receives the glory due to a Buddhist *chakravartin.* This text further maintains that *buddhas* and *chakravartins* only arise on *Jambudvīpa.*[1]

In another description, the wheel is the first of the 'seven treasures or jewels *(sapta-ratna)*' possessed by the *chakravartin.* The *chakraratna* (wheel-treasure) is described as a magical, fabulous, and thousand-spoked wheel *(chakravarta),* made of gold from the river *Jambu,* bedecked with jewels that appear at his birth and disappear at his death. This fabulous wheel carries the *chakravartin* and his entourage throughout the four *dvīpas,* finally returning them to his palace, where it serves as an ornament. The slipping of the wheel from its position heralds the end of the *chakravartin*'s reign.[2] In ancient Vedic texts, the *chakravarta* is a world-sustaining wheel of great power. To own that wheel puts the *chakravartin* at the hub of the universe. The other treasures of the *chakravartin* are an eight-faceted, wish-fulfilling gem *(chintāmaṇi),* as bright as the sun's rays, visible at a distance of several *yojanas* (a mythical unit of measurement, variously calculated at between two and twenty miles); a beautiful queen, exhibiting the thirty-two characteristics of feminine perfection; a wise and physically powerful minister, capable of locating underground treasure; a seven-legged, white elephant with a golden

necklace that can carry the *chakravartin* anywhere; a mythical horse with the colours of a peacock, able to traverse the four *dvīpas* in a single moment; and a mighty general, possessing sixty-four particular skills.

Other texts identify only three types of *chakravartin*. There is the *chakravāla chakravartin,* who rules the four continents – *chakravāla* (circle) being a mythical mountain range encircling the earth; the *dvīpa chakravartin,* who rules over only one continent, and the *pradesha* (region) *chakravartin,* who rules only part of one continent.

Buddhist texts also say that "two *chakravartin* kings are not found in the world together." By "world" is meant a *chatur-dvīpa* (world of four continents), of which there are many in the entire universe. The Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna explains:

> A *sūtra* has said that "two *buddhas* cannot appear together in the same world," but by "the same world" the *sūtra* does not mean to designate all the universes of the ten directions. The *sūtra* also says that "two *chakravartin* kings are not found in the world together;" it does not mean to say that two *chakravartin* kings cannot coexist in the same *trisāhasra-mahāsāhasra-lokadhātu* (great trichiliocosm, the largest grouping of world systems in Buddhist cosmology); it says only that two *chakravartin* kings cannot coexist in the same *chatur-dvīpaka* (universe of four continents). It is necessary to acquire very pure merit *(puṇya-vishuddhi)* in order to reign over the entire world without encountering a rival (as is the case for the *chakravartins*). If there were two kings (in the same world), that would mean that their merit was not pure.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 15:9, TVW1 p.426*

Buddhist Pali texts generally depict the *chakravartin* as the universal ruler and conqueror by virtue of his spiritual values rather than armed conquest. He is portrayed as possessing the ten *rāja-dhammas* (kingly virtues)[3] of liberality, good conduct, non-attachment, straightforwardness, mildness, austerity, non-anger, non-injury, patience, and forbearance.

Various texts also compare the *chakravartin* with the Buddha. It is said that when the Buddha was born as Siddhārtha Gautama, his father King Shuddhodana consulted eight *brāhmaṇ* astrologers concerning his son's future. Prior to Siddhārtha's birth, his mother had dreamt that she saw a white elephant entering her womb through the right side of her chest. Bearing this auspicious portent in mind, the astrologers all prophesied that the baby would become either a *chakravartin* or a *buddha,* he would either rule this world or would altogether transcend material reality and attain spiritual enlightenment. Kauṇḍinya, the youngest of the astrologers, who later became the first *arhat* among the Buddha's disciples, is reputed to have been the only

one who unequivocally predicted that Siddhārtha would become a *buddha.* In fact, the Buddha himself was called a *chakravartin,* since his teachings pervaded all lands.

The *chakravartin* is regarded as the secular counterpart of a *buddha,* and the *Lakkhaṇa Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* says that both bear the thirty-two bodily marks (Pa. *dvattiṃsa-lakkhaṇa*) of a great man *(mahāpurisa):*

> There are, monks, these thirty-two marks *(dvattiṃsa)* peculiar to a great man *(mahāpurisa)* and for that great man *(mahāpurisa)* who possesses them, only two careers are open. If he lives the household life, he will become a ruler, a wheel-turning righteous monarch *(cakkavattī)* of the law, conqueror of the four quarters, who has established the security of his realm and is possessed of the seven treasures *(satta ratana).* These are the wheel treasure, the elephant treasure, the horse treasure, the jewel treasure, the woman treasure, the householder treasure, and, as seventh, the counsellor treasure. He has more than a thousand sons who are heroes, of heroic stature, conquerors of the hostile army. He dwells having conquered this sea-girt land without stick or sword, by the law. But if he goes forth from the household life into homelessness, he will become an *arahanta,* a fully enlightened *buddha (sammā-sambuddha)* who has drawn back the veil from the world.
>
> *Dīgha Nikāya 30, Lakkhaṇa Sutta, PTSD3 pp.142–43, TBLD p.441*

Nevertheless, a *buddha* is superior to the *chakravartin* in every way:

> The noble *chakravartin* kings, *Indra, Brahmā,* and the *lokapālas* (world-protecting deities) are inferior to the *buddha.* What then can be said of ordinary men *(pṛithagjana)?* Why? The noble *chakravartin* kings are fettered by bonds *(bandhana-saṃyukta);* the *buddha* has broken the bonds. The noble *chakravartin* kings are sunk in the mire of birth *(jāti),* old age *(jarā),* sickness *(vyādhi),* and death *(maraṇa);* the *buddha* has transcended them. The noble *chakravartin* kings are enslaved by their passions; the *buddha* has eliminated them. The noble *chakravartin* kings dwell in the womb of the calamities of the human jungle *(lokakāntāra);* the *buddha* has escaped from it. The noble *chakravartin* kings dwell in the shadows of ignorance *(avidyāndhakāra);* the *buddha* lives in the supreme light. The noble *chakravartin* kings often reign over the four continents *(chatur-dvīpaka);* the *buddha* reigns over countless universes *(apramāṇa-lokadhātu).* The *chakravartin* kings have mastery over wealth *(parishkāra-vashitā);* the *buddha* has mastery over mind *(cheto-vashitā).* The noble *chakravartin* kings covet heavenly bliss *(deva-sukha);* the *buddha* covets nothing,

> having reached the well-being of the summit of existence *(bhavāgra-sukha).* The *chakravartin* kings seek their happiness from others; the *buddha* rejoices in his own heart. This is why the *buddha* surpasses the noble *chakravartin* kings. He also surpasses all the other beings, *Indra, Brahmā,* and the *lokapālas* who are even inferior to the noble *chakravartin* kings.
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 4:3; cf. TVW1 p.110*

A very similar passage adds:

> The noble *chakravartin* king has not eliminated all impurities *(kleshas);* the *buddha* has completely eliminated them.… The noble *chakravartin* king follows the dangerous path of *saṃsāra* (cycle of birth and death); the *buddha* has transcended it.… The noble *chakravartin* king has at his disposal material jewels *(āmisha-ratna);* the *buddha* has at his disposal the jewels of the spirit *(chitta-ratna).*
>
> *Nāgārjuna, Mahāprajñāpāramitā Shāstra 40:2.6; cf. TVW3 pp.1310–11*

The *chakravartin* represents the Buddhist political ideal of the just ruler or universal monarch who brings peace and prosperity to his subjects, although few historical rulers have been seen to embody this ideal.

Historically, the title first appears on monuments dating from the Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE), dedicated to Chandragupta and his grandson Ashoka. Ashoka is known for his gradual conversion to Buddhism and his subsequent missionary efforts on behalf of Buddhism after witnessing the mass destruction of human life caused by his war against Kalinga (now the state of Odisha, previously Orissa) in 261 BCE. The war resulted in 100,000 deaths and the forced relocation of 150,000 people.

Although attempts have been made to run a state according to Buddhist principles, Ashoka is the only historical ruler who has been commonly regarded as a *chakravartin.* A few rulers of the past have assumed the title of *chakravartin* in order to exert greater political power over the Buddhist community, extending secular law into the monastic code. In more recent times, U Nu, the first prime minister of Burma after independence in 1948, attempted to govern through political principles based on a mix of socialism and Buddhist ideology. Although his government survived an insurrection after only six months in office, it was ultimately overthrown by a military coup in 1962. Critics of the government suggested that U Nu focused too much on ideology and religious affairs, and neglected the more immediate social, political and economic problems facing his emerging state.[4] Others might say that it is impractical for a government, however benevolent and benign, to try to impose ethical and moral principles on human beings, the majority of whom are essentially only interested in their own personal advantage.

In Hindu texts, the *chakravartin* is a more or less legendary figure, and the title is applied as an honorary epithet. In the *Mahābhārata,* Bharata, son of Dushyanta and Shakuntalā, is depicted as a *chakravartin:* "The wheels of that illustrious *chakravartin,* when he goes forth to meet his enemies, shall be irresistible."[5] Bharata was the first of twelve powerful kings described as *chakravartins.*

The *Purāṇas* also speak of *chakravartins,* although there is no descriptive consensus or list of who was deemed to have ruled in such a mighty fashion. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* repeats that "after his father's death, Bharata became a *chakravartin.*"[6] According to the *Vishṇu Purāṇa,* a *chakravartin* – "one whose power is invincible, even by the gods" – is born with the mark of *Vishṇu*'s *chakra* on the palm of his hand.[7] He is also said to be the possessor of many treasures. The lists of treasures vary from text to text, but the seven treasures *(sapta-ratna)* are described more or less as in Buddhist texts.

Powerful as the legendary *chakravartin* may be, the *Maitrī Upanishad* points out that even he must ultimately be separated from his kingdom at the time of death. In this sense, he is no different from any other transient living being. Of those listed, some may have been historical although legend has elevated them into the realm of mythology:

> We see that all this is transient – gnats, mosquitoes and so on, and the grass and trees that flourish and die. But what of these? There are others too, some great warriors, some *chakravartins* – Sudyumna, Bhūridyumna, Indradyumna, Kuvalayāshva, Yauvanāshva, Vādhryashva, Ashvapati, Shashabindu, Harishchandra, Ambarīsha, Nahusha, Sharyāti, Yayāti, Anaraṇya, Ukshasena, and the rest; kings, too, like Marutta, Bharata and others, their whole families looking on, gave up their great sovereignty, and departed from this world into that.
>
> *Maitrī Upanishad 1:4*

In Jain mythology, the *chakravartins* are one of the five classes comprising the sixty-three *shalākā-purushas* (great personalities, heroes). They are all-powerful monarchs, lords of the six *dvīpas.* According to Jain tradition, twelve *chakravartins* are born in each ascending *(utsarpiṇī)* and descending *(avasarpiṇī)* half cycle of time in this part of the universe (known as *Bharata-Kshetra*). Each *chakravartin* is born during the life of a *Tīrthankara,* although in some instances the roles may be combined. In the current descending half cycle, the first *chakravartin* was Bharata, son of Ṛishabha, the first *Tīrthankara.* The fifth, sixth and seventh *chakravartins* are also listed as the sixteenth to eighteenth *Tīrthankaras,* namely, Shāntinātha, Kunthunātha, and Aranātha. Towards the end of their lives, the remaining nine *chakravartins* renounced their thrones in favour of the life of a Jain mendicant. Some attained liberation; others were reborn as gods *(devas)* in one of the heavenly realms;

and others, who ruled unjustly, or committed acts of violence *(hiṃsā)* or remained consumed by sense pleasures, became *nārakis,* denizens of hell *(naraka).*[8]

The lives and deeds of the Jain *shalākā-purushas* are recounted in what are known as the universal or legendary history texts, where the descriptions of their characteristics and the events in their lives often conform to a standard pattern: they are of a golden complexion, their mothers have auspicious dreams at the time of their conception, and so on. Like Buddhist *chakravartins,* they possess the seven – or sometimes nine – treasures. These are described in much the same way as the seven treasures listed in Buddhist texts, with the wise and powerful minister and the general being replaced by great wealth and a fabulous chariot, perhaps in deference to the rigorous application of the Jain principle of non-injury *(ahiṃsā).* The list of nine treasures includes a wise minister and a son.

See also: **shalākā-purusha**, **Tīrthakara**.

1. Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakosha Bhāshya* 3:95–96, *ABV2* pp.484–85.
2. See "cakraratna," *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism, ODB.*
3. *E.g. Jātaka* 1:50, 2:151, 193, *Dummedha Jātaka, PTSJ1* p.260, *JSBB1* p.127; *Rājovāda Jātaka, PTSJ2* p.1, *JSBB2* p.1; *Culla-Paduma Jātaka, PTSJ2* p.118, *JSBB2* p.83, *passim.*
4. See "U Nu," *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism, ODB.*
5. *Mahābhārata* 1:73.30.
6. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 9:20.23, *SBMG* p.1018.
7. *Vishṇu Purāṇa* 1:13.46.
8. See "cakravartin," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**chief fisher** See **fisher**.

**chosen one** (He. *baḥir*) The messiah of the Hebrew Bible; hence, in Christianity, Jesus Christ; in Jewish apocalyptic and eschatological texts such as *1 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham,*[1] the messiah who will come at the end of the world; also, Jacob, known as Israel, father of the twelve patriarchs of Israel;[2] in Manichaeism and Mandaeism, the saviour who comes to rescue souls from this world, and return with them to God; also, as the chosen ones (plural), the children of Israel and, in later times, the followers of Jesus, Mānī, and the Mandaean saviours; also translated as 'elect one'.

In *Isaiah,* the prophet Isaiah writes four songs concerning an unnamed and untitled "servant of *Yahweh*". Though the obvious interpretation would be that it is a prophecy about the long-awaited messiah, Isaiah actually gives

no clue as to whom he is referring. He could just as easily have been speaking of himself or of saviours in general. Christians, however, have understood the passages to be a prophecy concerning Jesus as the long-awaited messiah, as depicted by the New Testament writers,[3] but this remains an interpretation and belief. According to Isaiah's literary style, it is God who is speaking:

> Here is My servant whom I uphold:
> My chosen one *(baḥir)* in whom my soul delights.
> I have endowed him with My Spirit
> that he may bring true justice to the nations.
>
> *Isaiah 42:1, JB*

In *1 Enoch,* the messiah, the "Son of Man", is said to have dwelt in the presence of God ("Lord of the Spirits" or "Ancient of Days") before creation, "even before the sun and the moon were created, before the stars of the heaven were made." The description continues:

> He shall be as a staff for the righteous, for them to lean upon and not fall. He shall be the light of the nations, and the hope of those who are troubled in heart. All those who dwell on earth shall fall and worship before him; they will glorify, and bless, and celebrate with song the name of the Lord of the Spirits. For this purpose, he became the chosen, concealed in His own presence, before the creation of the world, and for eternity.
>
> *1 Enoch 48:4–6; cf. BE p.66, OTP1 p.35*

Alluding to the Judaic belief in the messiah as the chosen one, both the Mandaean and Manichaean writings refer to their respective saviours by the same epithet. In a prayer to Mānī, for example, a devotee writes:

> Mānī, son of gods, Lord,
> Life-giver, great shepherd of the path,
> To you, Chosen One, I pay homage.
> May you be merciful, father,
> Mānī, Lord, Life-giver.
> He brings life to the dead,
> and light to those in darkness.
> Draw me upwards, Mānī, Lord.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, HR2 pp.66–67ff.; cf. ML p.52*

In another text, the chosen one is identified as *Yawar* ('Dazzling One'), one of the many Mandaean names for God. The chosen one takes the "chosen righteous" to their eternal home, the "place of light":

> *Yawar,* the Chosen One, founded a *shkinta* (inner dwelling) –
> a *shkinta* did *Yawar* found,
> and the chosen righteous were established therein.
> Therein were the chosen righteous established,
> and they arise and behold the place of light.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 140; cf. CPM p.126*

At another place, the chosen one, as the saviour, is said to return to the dwelling of the Divine:

> The chosen one, the pure one,
> went to the place where dwells the Perfect One.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 251; cf. CPM p.208*

See also: **elect one**, **mashi´aḥ**, **righteous one**, **servant**.

1. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 31:1, *OTP1* p.704.
2. *E.g. Isaiah* 41:8, 44:1; *Psalms* 105:6.
3. *Matthew* 12:17*ff.; Luke* 4:17–21*ff.; Acts* 3:13*ff.,* 8:32–33.

**Christ** (He. *mashi´aḥ,* Gk. *christos, messias,* L. *christus*) *Lit.* anointed one; a term generally reserved for Jesus Christ; *christos* and *christus* are from the same root as chrism (Gk. *chrisma,* L. *chrisma*), meaning consecrated oil, ointment, or water.

According to the account in John's gospel, Andrew, having met Jesus, immediately tells his brother Simon (whom Jesus subsequently renames Peter):

> He first finds his own brother Simon, and says to him, "We have found the *Messias,*" which is, being interpreted, the Christ.
>
> *John 1:41; cf. KJV*

Christianity is founded on the belief that Jesus was the long-awaited Jewish messiah. The Jewish understanding of the messiah at that time was as both king and prophet, as deliverer from foreign oppression as well as spiritual leader. According to the traditional history recounted in the Christian gospels, the fact that many believed Jesus to be the messiah was the cause of his conflict with the Jewish authorities, who subsequently enlisted the aid of the Roman authorities in order to be rid of him. In this way, according to Christian belief, both parties played their pre-ordained parts in the divine plan, which led to Jesus' crucifixion. For – according to the doctrine – by his suffering, Jesus took on the 'sins of the world', and by his death he vanquished

Satan, demonstrating his mastery over death by his physical resurrection and subsequent bodily ascent into heaven.

Jesus himself did not claim to be the messiah. In fact, according to the account in John's gospel, when Pilate asks him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" he pointedly responds, "My kingdom is not of this world;"[1] and when Pilate asks him a second time whether he is a king, Jesus replies:

> It is you who are saying that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this purpose did I come into the world: that I should bear witness to the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth hears my Voice.
>
> *John 18:37; cf. KJV*

In the double meaning and allegorized narrative so characteristic of *John,* the writer uses the dialogue to point out that Jesus' mission was to teach the Truth; and as the same writer points out elsewhere in his gospel, by "Truth"[2] he means the divine Word *(Logos),* which he also refers to as his "Voice".[3]

It has been suggested many times that Jesus was simply caught up in the political situation of the day. Without the background and aspirations of the Jewish freedom movement, the machinations of the Jewish leaders and the fears of the Roman rulers, Jesus might never have been brought to trial. As a consequence, his influence would have been restricted to his followers, Paul would never have become his self-proclaimed advocate; no religion would have been formed in Jesus' name; and Jesus would have made little or no impact on history.

It is because Jesus was understood to be the Jewish messiah that Christianity adopted the Hebrew Bible, which was redesignated as the Old Testament to distinguish it from the New Testament. From the time of Jesus, it is believed, a new dispensation came into being, replacing the ancient covenant made by God with Moses on behalf of the Jews.

Although, strictly speaking, Christ is a title, and Jesus is the name of the man himself, within a few decades of Jesus' death, the names Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ, and Christ Jesus had become largely interchangeable, as witnessed by their use in the New Testament. Even so, the doctrine that the real Christ was the pre-existent Word *(Logos)* of John's gospel has long been a part of Christian theology. Indeed, it remains a cardinal doctrine of the Orthodox Church that Christ as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is identical with the *Logos.*

The doctrine of the *Logos* as the divine creative power existed long before the birth of Jesus. It was a part of the mystical doctrine of the Greeks;[4] the Alexandrian Jewish contemporary of Jesus, Philo Judaeus, speaks of it;[5] and it is also paralleled in the *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom) of the Jews, as the power by which *Yahweh* created all things.[6] Nonetheless, it is Christian belief that Jesus was unique in that in him the *Logos* had incarnated as a man. As it

says in John's gospel, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."[7] The mystical and pre-existent nature of this "Son of God" is also emphasized in *Hebrews,* which speaks of God's "Son, . . . by whom also he made the worlds".[8] Likewise, *1 Colossians* speaks of the "dear Son", "for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth."[9]

The establishment of Christianity as a new religion was marked by ongoing controversies over doctrine and belief, leading inevitably to discord, schism, and exclusion. The many church councils, intended largely to sort out problems of conflicting doctrine between the many churches, often resulted only in further schism. High on the agenda was the nature of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and His relationship to the Holy Ghost and to God. Many of the fine distinctions and intellectual abstractions seem almost unintelligible in present times, and though it may have been self-evident to the wiser ones among them that such things are ineffable and cannot be understood by the human mind, these matters were nonetheless the subject of heated debate. Ultimately, the controversies of the fourth century, after Christianity had received authentication from the Roman Empire, were resolved into the orthodox belief of the Trinity as three divine persons in one divine Essence. There were, however, two natures – one human, one divine – which had come together in the person of Jesus Christ. The controversies of the fifth century were mostly centred around the relationship between these two natures.

Later Christian mystical writers introduced the concepts of the cosmic Christ and Christ consciousness. Since Christ is identified with the *Logos* as the universal spiritual principle behind all creation, so too may this power be called the cosmic Christ, and awareness of it, Christ consciousness or cosmic consciousness. Moreover, according to the gospels, Jesus said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,"[10] and:

> I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither does it know him. But you know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
>
> *John 14:16–18; cf. KJV*

Here, the "Comforter" and the "Spirit of Truth" are synonymous with the *Logos.* Understanding such promises to apply to everyone in posterity, not just to the disciples to whom they were addressed, it is believed that Christ lives on in a cosmic or universal spiritual guise, as the cosmic Christ. Interpreting an awareness of a universal divine presence arising from the practice of Christian-oriented contemplation, Christian thinkers such as Teilhard de

Chardin have described the experience as a consciousness of a universal or cosmic aspect of Christ.[11]

See also: **Logos** (3.1), **mashi´aḥ**.

1. *John* 18:33, 36; *cf. KJV.*
2. *John* 1:1, 14, 17, 4:23–24, 5:33, 8:32, 14:6, 17, 15:26, 16:13, 17:17–19.
3. *John* 3:29, 5:25, 28, 37, 10:3–5, 16, 27.
4. *E.g.* Epicharmus, *Fragment* 57; Heraclitus, *Fragments* 1, 68, 72, 118; *Orphic Text,* in Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen* VII:15–17, *PG8 col.*181, *WCA1* p.74; Plato, *Republic* 6:500c, 7:531d–533a, *Phaedo* 84a–b, *Phaedrus* 276a–b; Plotinus, *Enneads* 3:2.15.
5. *E.g.* Philo Judaeus, *On the Confusion of Tongues* 28.
6. *E.g. Proverbs* 3:13–19, 4:7–9, 8:22–36; *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach* 1:4–22, 6:18–37, 14:20–27, 15:1–10; *Wisdom of Solomon* 1:4–7, 6:12–16, 7:7–30, 8:1–8.
7. *John* 1:14, *KJV.*
8. *Hebrews* 1:2, *KJV.*
9. *Colossians* 1:16, *KJV.*
10. *Matthew* 28:20; *cf. KJV.*
11. *E.g.* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *My Universe, SCTC* p.83; *Catholicism and Science, SCTC* p.189; *Cosmic Life, WWTC* p.58; *The Divine Milieu, DMTC* p.105; *The Mass on the World, HMTC* pp.131–32.

**christos** (Gk) *Lit.* anointed one, Christ, messiah. See **Christ**, **mashi´aḥ**.

**chūjiārén** (C) *Lit.* a person *(rén)* who leaves *(chū)* home *(jiā);* someone who leaves their family or household in order to live as a monastic; hence, a Daoist monk *(dàoshì)* or nun *(dàogū);* sometimes translated as 'recluse'.

*Chūjiārén* choose to live a solitary life in the belief that this will help them relinquish and/or avoid the entanglements and attachments that inevitably arise from a householder's life. Especially in the monastic environment, all Daoist *chūjiārén* are treated equally; they wear similar vestments, and join in the same ceremonies. Their ideal is for every waking minute to be fully dedicated to spiritual practice.

Being a Daoist monk or a nun, whether resident in a monastery or not, is generally associated with abiding by a strict code of living, adhering to the rules and regulations of the school to which they belong. Such behavioural controls usually include celibacy, abstinence from alcohol, and dietary restrictions – such as not eating meat or the five strong-smelling vegetables (*wǔxīn:* garlic, ginger, onions, leeks, and scallions). These strict codes of

living guide the efforts of *chūjiārén,* helping them to make progress in their spiritual practices.

Thirteenth-century Daoist master Yǐn Zhìpíng discusses the daily discipline required to achieve the detachment to which *chūjiārén* aspire:

> Those who have left the household life *(chūjiārén)* must examine their minds and figure out how many evil thoughts they have had during the morning and the day. Thoughts of liquor, sex, wealth and anger *(jiǔsècáiqì)* are not the only desires *(yù);* all thoughts of things that you have been fond of up to now are all desires. Even though it may be only by one thing at a time, you should do away with these wrongs. In a natural manner, your mind will be easier to subdue and will gradually become peaceful.
>
> People say that attaining the *Dào* is very difficult. But if a practitioner *(xiūxíngrén)* can turn the mind around, the tinkling (like that of gem pendants) will become clear and distinct, and his spiritual practice *(xiūxíng)* will become much easier. (If you are) untroubled by smoky fires (desires), or discrimination between right and wrong, or self and others, then the fruits *(gōng)* of (your) practice *(xíng)* will come quickly.
>
> *Yǐn Zhìpíng, Zhēnxiān zhízhǐ yǔlù 2:1a; cf. TPEQ pp.28–29*

Here, Yǐn Zhìpíng indicates that clearing the mind of desires and negative thoughts – which, he points out, includes even thoughts of partiality and admiration – will rapidly lead a practitioner towards spiritual progress.

According to present-day translator and Daoist scholar Stephen Eskildsen, disciplined observance of codes of moral and spiritual living is evident in the present day:

> In my own visits to China, I have been impressed by how Daoist monks and nuns are upholding strict standards of discipline.... I was able to verify that celibacy, vegetarianism, and the renunciation of luxuries were generally mandatory for monks and nuns.
>
> *Stephen Eskildsen, Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion, AETR p.157*

*Chūjiārén* control their physical actions and movements out of a sense of submission to their higher spiritual goal, particularly in the monastic environment. They must behave at all times with humility and decorum, which is most evidently expressed by bowing and obeisance:

> It is hard to know how respectful the mind is, but the formally bent *(qū)* body can be clearly seen. For this reason, we must perform obeisances *(lǐ)* of the body in the diligent and attentive manner *(yīnqín),* so as to

> give expression to the worthiness and sincerity *(zhēnzhòng)* of the mind within *(nèixīn).* Thus humbling yourself *(qūjǐ),* you express respect *(zhìjìng).*
>
> *Shíshì wēiyí 3a, CCED p.95*

Accordingly, *chūjiārén* bow frequently, especially to the senior monks *(gāosēng)* and before sacred statues, and they perform obeisance *(lǐ)* with proper posture and dignity.

Although the circumstances in a retreat may seem outwardly favourable and conducive, it is not merely being a monastic that ensures progress on the spiritual path. It is the attitude of mind as well as how one's time is spent that determine whether or not there will be success in the attainment of the *Dào:*

> Whether you remain entangled *(chán)* in the bonds of the world, or you free yourself from them, depends entirely on the state of your mind *(xīn).* If you have attained complete enlightenment *(liǎo),* you can be in a slaughterhouse or in a wine cellar and still feel that you are living in the pure land *(jìngtǔ).*
>
> On the other hand, even though you spend your time in elegant pursuits, like playing the lute, raising cranes, or appreciating flowers, you will still not be able to banish yearnings for material comforts from your mind.
>
> An old saying goes: "If you can rid yourself of all worldly desires, this commonplace world becomes a paradise. But if you cannot grasp the truth and cast off mundane longings, then – even if you don monk's *(sēng)* robes and dwell in a temple – you will still be an unenlightened person." Indeed, it is so!
>
> *Hóng Zìchéng, Càigēntán 314; cf. TRW p.314*

*Jìngtǔ* is a Buddhist term, generally used for Amitābha Buddha's western pure land (S. *sukhāvatī*), also known in Chinese as *jílè* (ultimate bliss), *ānlè* (peaceful bliss), and *xītiān* (western heaven). Here, *jìngtǔ* refers to the highest spiritual realms.

**clairvoyant** A person with the ability to see or know things beyond the range of the physical senses; someone gifted with extrasensory perception, the power to foretell future events, and so on; from *clairvoyance* (French, clear seeing). Such people are attested in the earliest literature, and have probably existed in all cultures, literate or otherwise. See **clairvoyance** (7.3).

**coenobite**, **cenobite** A member of a religious order following a communal rule; from the Greek *koinobion* (convent), which in turn comes from *koinos* (common) + *bios* (life); a monk living in a community; contrasted with an eremite (hermit).

See also: **hermit**, **monk**.

**companion** An associate, comrade, or friend; in mystical writings, either the followers and disciples of a master, or the master himself, as the eternal friend or companion of the soul, who travels with the soul through all the vicissitudes of material life, as well as on the journey back to God. The words of the original languages are often translated as 'friend'. In Manichaean texts, the companion (Gk. *syzygos,* 'yoked together') often refers to the spiritual or inner form of the master, also called the twin, the counterpart, or the familiar.

In the early Christian *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas addresses Jesus as:

> O companion and ally of the feeble;
> Hope and confidence of the poor (in spirit);
> Refuge and lodging of the weary;
> Voice that came forth from on high;
> Comforter dwelling within the hearts of your believers.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 156; cf. ANT p.432, AAA p.288*

And:

> Our Lord – companion of his servants,
> and guide and conductor of those who believe in him.
>
> *Acts of Thomas I, AAA p.153*

And:

> Behold the companion of his servants,
> to whom he is a light in darkness.
> Behold the help of his servants,
> to whom he is a helper in afflictions.
>
> *Acts of Thomas VIII, AAA p.256*

And again:

> He shall be a companion for you in the fearful way,
> and he shall guide you to his kingdom,

and shall bring you to eternal life,
giving you that confidence
that neither passes away nor changes.
*Acts of Thomas 103; cf. ANT p.409*

The term also appears in Mandaean texts, as in an allegory where Adam (the soul), having first proclaimed that he was the king of all the world, then realizes that there is, in fact, One who is greater than he. He says:

I said that there was no king greater than I,
but now I know that there exists
That which is greater than myself.
I pray that I may see Him,
and take Him for my companion.
*Alma Rishaia Rba 4:110ff., SA p.25; cf. PNC p.6*

In a Mandaean psalm, the mythical saviour *Manda-ḍ-Hiia* ('Knowledge of Life', '*Gnōsis* of Life') is portrayed as the eternal guide and companion of the soul:

And *Manda-ḍ-Hiia* will watch over him in his place;
He will guide him, will rejoice with him,
and be his companion for ever and ever.
*Mandaean Prayer Book 368, CPM p.259*

In another Mandaean text, the saviour himself pledges his assistance to the soul who sincerely seeks it:

If he to whom I speak, listens,
if he to whom I call shows himself firm,
and is knit into the communion of Life,
and built into the great fabric of Reality –
Then I will be his companion, and his guide and saviour.
*Mandaean Prayer Book 18; cf. CPM p.13, GVM p.79*

See also: **companion** (▸4), **friend**, **twin** (7.2).

**Compassionate One** An epithet generally used in translation for the Buddha, but also, on occasion, for other saviours, especially in Manichaean and Mandaean texts. A psalm to Jesus among the Coptic Manichaean psalms, for instance, invokes the help of the saviour:

I call upon you, O eternal conqueror:
Hear my cry, O compassionate one,
  and let your members cleanse me;
Wash me in your holy Waters,
  and make me spotless, even as I (really) am.
Lo, the time has drawn near,
  may I return to my (true) habitations.
*Manichaean Psalm Book CCL; cf. MPB p.59*

Likewise, one of the Parthian texts petitions the help and mercy of the third-century Iranian mystic Mānī:

O God, merciful Lord Mānī –
  O father of light, . . .
  O father of blessing,
  O beneficent and desired Lord –
Have mercy upon us, O light,
  O merciful and compassionate one –
Great mercy and compassion.
Come, hearken, (all) beings:
Come, let us seek salvation.
*Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.75ff., RMP dv; cf. GSR p.171*

In the Mandaean texts, the Compassionate One is used for God:

I worship and praise that lofty and great King of Light,
  the Compassionate One who is full of lovingkindness.
*Mandaean Prayer Book 106, CPM p.107*

The term is also used as a name of God in the Nestorian Christian liturgies.[1]

See also: **compassion** (▸4), **compassion (of God)** (▸4).

1. *Nestorian Liturgy, NR2* pp.30, 33, 118, 247, 318.

**confessor** In Christianity, especially the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, a priest who hears confessions, sets penances, grants absolution of sins on behalf of "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit", and who may also act as a spiritual adviser or director.

The belief in absolution of sins aside, the greatest benefit to be derived from the confession of sins would seem to be psychological – from being able

to unburden oneself and receive good counsel. Not all confessors, however, are of equal ability and wisdom. Some can undoubtedly make matters worse, especially those of a more zealous nature. Hence the advice of François de Sales, "Seek the best confessor you can."[1] This is particularly pertinent, since obedience to the confessor's instructions is deemed obligatory as a part of the essential humbling of the mind.

Ordinary human relationships may have a part to play, and a confessor who is best suited to one person, may not be the best for another. And while a confessor may at times get things badly wrong, the penitent may also be at fault. In this respect, John of the Cross has some pertinent observations regarding the spiritual pride of beginners:

> Sometimes, too, when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and behaviour (for they are anxious that all they do shall be esteemed and praised), they consider that they do not understand them, or that, because they do not approve of this and comply with that, their confessors are themselves not spiritual. And so they immediately desire to contrive to find someone else who will fit in with their tastes; for as a rule they desire to speak of spiritual matters with those who they think will praise and esteem what they do, and they flee, as they would from death, from those who disabuse them in order to lead them into a safe road – sometimes they even harbour ill will against them. . . .
>
> Many such persons desire to be the favourites of their confessors and to become intimate with them, as a result of which there beset them continual occasions of envy and disquiet. They are too much embarrassed to confess their sins nakedly, lest their confessors should think less of them, so they palliate them, and make them appear less evil, and thus it is to excuse themselves rather than to accuse themselves that they go to confession. And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell the wrongs that they have done, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong at all, but only good; and thus they always take pleasure in telling him what is good, and sometimes in such terms as make it appear to be greater than it is rather than less, desiring that he may think them to be good, when it would be greater humility in them, . . . to depreciate it, and to desire that neither he nor anyone else should consider them of account.
>
> *John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul 2:3–4, CWJC1 pp.332–33*

See also: **confession** (▸3).

1. François de Sales, *Devout Life* 1:6, *IDL* p.19.

**contemplative** A person dedicated to a meditative way of life and the practice of contemplation. Practically all religions have a place for the contemplative side of human nature, which is expressed more in some individuals than in others, and is given greater importance in some religious traditions than in others. Though the details vary considerably between traditions, the various contemplative practices all share the common ground of the development of an inner spiritual life and consciousness, with the ultimate goal of direct inner experience of a higher state of being, which some traditions describe as union with God.

Christian tradition commonly speaks of two ways to serve God, the active life and the contemplative life, often frequently exemplified by reference to Luke's brief story of Martha and Mary.[1] Martha spends her time serving others, while Mary sits apart. When Martha complains to Jesus, he replies:

> Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.
>
> *Luke 10:41–42; cf. KJV*

It is presumed that the "good part" chosen by Mary is the contemplative life, while Martha's life of service epitomizes the active life. It is on the belief that the soul can only know God, and experience peace and tranquillity, in quietness and seclusion from the distractions of the world that the secluded contemplative life of Christian monasteries and convents has been founded. Sixteenth-century Spanish mystic Diego de Estella summarizes the difference between the two lifestyles:

> Actives have their conversation upon the earth, while contemplatives, seeking those things that are above and not on the earth, have their conversation in heaven. Actives are fish that swim in the water; contemplatives are birds that soar in the air. The former are cumbered with their work; in the latter, dwells God in quietness. The active life ends in this world; the contemplative life continues forever.
>
> *Diego de Estella, Life of St John, TVEJ fol.92r, 92v, in SSM2 p.178*

The highest experience of the Christian contemplative is union with God. Speculating on the spiritual heights obtained by John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, Diego de Estella conveys his understanding of this supreme experience:

> He lived in the world, yet treated with God concerning business that is above the highest heaven. All his understanding he employed in refining the divine mysteries and penetrating the darkest secrets of the Holy Trinity, being raised in marvellous wise to a knowledge of the

> deep and hidden things of heaven. As he rested in the arms of Christ, the soul of St John became so deeply absorbed in God that he was changed into another man, wholly transported in God and by divine participation made God.
>
> In such wise did he dwell in God that his soul could scarcely be recognized as his own. Who can recognize the iron that lies within the fire? A difficult task would it be to distinguish the iron from the burning coals, when it has their colour as well as their heat, is aflame and kindled, and has its form and all its accidents changed into fire. Even so was St John absorbed by the fire of the Divinity, so that by participation he became another God, was changed into God, converted into God and transformed into God without change of substance – even as iron, without changing its substance, which is ingenerable and incorruptible, varies its form and takes new effects and powers.
>
> *Diego de Estella, Life of St John, TVEJ fol.147r–v, in SSM2 p.179*

The contemplative who has some genuine inner experience comes to know things concerning the workings of God and His creation that are veiled from normal human perception. As the unknown author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Book of Privy Counselling* writes:

> Believe me, if a contemplative had the tongue and the language to express what he experiences, all the scholars in Christendom would marvel at his wisdom. Yes indeed, for by comparison the entire compendium of human knowledge would appear as sheer ignorance. Do not be surprised, then, if my rough and earthy human tongue is quite unable to explain its value adequately. God forbid that the experience itself should be distorted by forcing it into the narrow confines of human language. No, this must not happen, and certainly will never happen; and God forbid that I should ever want that! Whatever we may say of it is not *it,* is not the thing itself.
>
> *Book of Privy Counselling 7; cf. CU p.157, CUCW p.180*

Not only does the contemplative enjoy inner bliss and a mystical knowledge of things, he also finds some benefits at the material level:

> All who engage in this work of contemplation find that it has a good effect on the body as well as on the soul, for it makes them attractive in the eyes of all who see them. So much so that the ugliest person alive who becomes, by grace, a contemplative finds that he suddenly (and again by grace) is different, and that every good man he sees is glad and happy to have his friendship, and is spiritually refreshed, and helped nearer God by his company.

> Therefore, seek to get this gift by grace; for whoever really has it will be well able to control both himself and his possessions by virtue of it. It gives him discernment, when he needs it, to read people's needs and characters. It gives him the knack of being at home with everyone he talks to, habitual sinner or not, without sinning himself . . . to the astonishment of the onlooker, and with a magnetic effect on others, drawing them by grace to the same spiritual work that he practises.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 54, CUCW p.125*

Indeed, the love experienced by a contemplative is so profound that he finds that he loves everyone, and no individuals in particular:

> The perfect contemplative holds no man as such in special regard, be he kinsman, stranger, friend, or foe. For all men alike are his brothers, and none strangers. He considers all men his friends, and none his foes. To such an extent that even those who hurt and injure him, he reckons to be real and special friends, and he is moved to wish for them as much good as he would wish for his very dearest friend.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 24, CUCW p.92*

To reach a state of such advanced consciousness, however, is not easy, because the spirit is still weighed down by the body, as Richard of Victor points out:

> Surely everyone realizes how hard it is, almost impossible indeed, for a mortal soul still new to spiritual affairs, to grow in the knowledge of invisible things, and to focus the contemplative eye on matters spiritual? The reason is that a soul that is still of the flesh and, as it were, unlettered, knows nothing but physical things, and only what is visible occurs to its mind. Nevertheless, it looks within as best it can, and uses its imagination to perceive what as yet it can't know spiritually.
>
> *Richard of Victor, Benjamin 5, LPD p.103*

As Richard Rolle points out, it is only rarely that even those devoted to the contemplative life experience "heavenly things":

> It is clear to lovers that no one attains the heights of devotion or is ravished by the sweetness of contemplation all at once. In fact, it is only occasionally, and then only for a moment, that they are granted the experience of heavenly things; only little by little do they at last gain spiritual strength. When they have gained a certain balance in their conduct and have attained stability of mind – as much as changing circumstances permit – and, after great labour, have acquired some degree of perfection – only then they can feel some joy in loving God.

> Nevertheless, it is not the case that all those who are great in virtue will in time feel the true warmth of created or uncreated love, nor melt in the measureless fire of love and sing within themselves the song of God's praise. This mystery is hidden from many and is revealed only to a special few. For the more sublime the degree (of love), the fewer there are in this world who find it.
>
> It is no surprise that we seldom find a man so holy or so perfect in this earthly life and enraptured by so high a love that he is lifted up to the sweetness of Melody in contemplation. That is to say that he receives within himself the heavenly Sound that is poured into him, and through this Melody reflects back the praises of God as though it were a harmony, composing many sweet notes of music in spiritual praise, and feels within himself the fire of the love of God.
>
> Nevertheless, it is surprising that a contemplative should be understood in any other way. He is like the psalmist who, representative of the typical contemplative, exclaims, "I will go into the house of the Lord with the voice of praise and thanksgiving."[2] Such praise, of course, is the praise offered by one who 'feasts', of one made glad by heavenly sweetness. Truly, perfect souls, who have been caught up in the surpassing abundance of eternal friendship and are imbued with an undiminishing sweetness, find new life in this radiant chalice, full of sweet love. In holy happy wisdom, they draw a joyful heat into their souls by which, greatly gladdened, they enjoy the comfort of a spiritual healing medicine greater by far than can be imagined.
>
> This refreshment of those who truly love is the height of their eternal heritage, even though, here in this earthly exile, sufferings may befall them. However, it does not appear unprofitable to them to endure a few years' hardship in order to be raised up to heavenly thrones, never again to leave them. Out of all mankind, they have been chosen to be the beloved of our Maker, and to be crowned with glory; for like the seraphim in the highest heaven, they have been inflamed by the same love. Though outwardly they may have sat in solitary state, in mind they have kept the company of angels, and have yearned for their Beloved.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 2; cf. FLML (1:2) pp.19–20, FLRR pp.51–52*

Those who are truly inspired by the Holy Spirit need no advice from others, he says, for they are rightly guided by God:

> He who has such joy in this life, and is made glad by it, is inspired by the Holy Spirit: he cannot err, and whatever he does, it is rightful. No mortal man can give him such sound advice as that which he has within himself from God eternal. If others would advise him, they will

> surely go astray because they do not understand the way things are. But he himself will not err, however much he might agree with them, because God will not permit it; for God keeps him within His will, so that he does not stray outside of it. Of such it is said, "The spiritual man judges all things, and is himself judged by no man."[3]
>
> No one should presume, however, that he is such a one because his renunciation of the world is perfect and his entrance into the solitary state irreproachable, and because he has risen up to the contemplation of heavenly things. This grace is not granted to all contemplatives, but only seldom and to very few, and then only to those who have attained supreme quiet of mind and body; for they have been chosen solely for the work of loving God. Truly, it is difficult to find such people, for they are so few; and they are held very dear, and are much sought after, loved by God and man. Angels also rejoice when such people quit this life, for then they become company for the angels. On the other hand, there are many who, in great devotion and sweetness, offer their prayers to God, and through their prayers and meditation feel the sweetness of contemplation, yet who advance no further, but remain in their state of quietude.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 11; cf. FLML (1:11) p.55, FLRR p.79*

In the Christian tradition, contemplatives who lead an active life are rare, and the perceived opinion is that the combination is not possible. Richard Rolle advises that contemplatives should not be asked to undertake official duties:

> Those contemplatives who are most on fire with the love of eternity are the highest in this most lovely burning, and the most beloved of the eternal Lover. They seldom engage in outward activity or accept the dignity of ecclesiastical rank or advancement. Rather, keeping themselves within themselves, they are always ready in mind to reach up to Christ in joy and songs of praise. In this, the church is following the angelic hierarchy, for the highest angels are not sent outward, but stay forever close to God. Similarly, the masters of contemplative love are so occupied with the things of God alone that they are not interested in dominion over others. Such matters are reserved for those more concerned with that kind of activity, and who are less interested in inward delight.
>
> Therefore, each chosen one has a preordained place before God and, while one may be chosen for advancement, the other may be striving to surrender himself wholly to God. And God raises him up thereto, so that he leaves all outward occupations. Such folk are indeed most holy, though people generally rate them pretty low, since they seldom

> go out of their way to perform miracles; rather, they prefer to remain in interior solitude.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 3; cf. FLML (1:3) p.22, FLRR pp.53–54*

In fact, giving them honour and position in this world would only hinder their progress:

> Holy contemplatives . . . are the most rare of men and therefore the most dear. Like gold in their outstanding and fervent love, they are like the firmament in the glory of their heavenly communion. They surpass the life of all the saints, and are the most beautiful and bright of all such jewels. . . . They whose sole purpose is to love and possess the spiritual life shine more brightly than all other men, past or present. And if anyone should wish to polish them, so to speak, by loading them with honours, he would only diminish their ardour, and dull their beauty and their brightness. And if they themselves accept the honour of public office, they do in fact demean themselves, and become of lesser worth. Therefore, they should be left to engage in their own meditations, in order that their brightness may increase.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 14; cf. FLML (1:14) p.68, FLRR p.91*

Rolle is scathing of the belief that it is possible to combine the active and the contemplative lives:

> Many pitiful creatures are deceived, thinking that they are loving God when they are not. They imagine that they can occupy themselves with worldly things, and at the same time truly enjoy the love of Jesus Christ with sweetness. They think that they can run about in the world and still be contemplatives – something that those who love God fervently and who have entered the contemplative life have deemed impossible. But in their folly and lack of heavenly wisdom, they are puffed up with such knowledge as they have acquired, and entertain a wrong notion of themselves. They do not yet know how to hold on to God with love.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 34; cf. FLML (2:4) p.146, FLRR p.151*

Like Rolle, Walter Hilton insists that the "endless bliss" of divine love and the love and wonder of God are the contemplative's goal. These, he maintains, are of greater significance than other spiritual experiences:

> Be rooted and grounded in love – not in order to experience sound or sweet savours or other (supra-)physical sensations – but that with all the saints you may know and experience something of the greatness of the infinite being of God, the wideness of His wonderful love and

goodness, the height of His almighty majesty, and the boundless depths of His wisdom.

The occupation of a contemplative consists in acquiring the knowledge and experience of these four things, upon which depends the whole science of the spiritual life.

This is the one thing that St Paul desired, when he said: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."[4] In other words, one thing I earnestly desire, and that is to forget all that is behind me, and to reach forward with all my heart to grasp and enjoy the supreme reward of endless bliss. All material things are behind us, before us are the spiritual; therefore St Paul desires to forget all material things, even his own body, so that he may see those that are spiritual.

*Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:12–13, LPH pp.13–14*

See also: **contemplation** (▸3), **mystic**.

1. *Luke* 10:38–42.
2. *Psalms* 42:4.
3. *1 Corinthians* 2:15.
4. *1 Philippians* 3:13, *KJV.*

**cornerstone** See **stone that the builders rejected**.

**daēva** (Av), **div** (Pv) *Lit.* giver of light; from the same root as the Sanskrit *deva* (god), from the root *div* (to shine); originally, a complimentary epithet for the deities and priests of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion; in later Zoroastrian times, demon, devil, evil spirit; a term used by Zarathushtra in his *Gāthās,* where it refers either to demons and deities, or to priests, worldly minded leaders, and false teachers of various kinds who lead others astray, even though they may purport to teach the truth; hence, human beings who lead others into delusion and illusion. Since the majority of the priests of Zarathushtra's time opposed him, the term developed an increasingly negative connotation in later Zoroastrian texts, and may have contributed to the increasing use of the term for demons, as in *Aēshma Daēva,* the demon of anger, passion, violence, and bloodthirstiness.

The attribution of all troubles and negativity to devils or demons is a common feature of ancient mythology, and is not associated with any particular religion. Unfashionable in modern times, demons or devils that incite human beings to indulge their moral weaknesses have long been an intrinsic aspect of Christian doctrine. Whether Zarathushtra subscribed to this belief is uncertain,

since the relevant passages in his *Gāthās* can be understood either as priests and worldly leaders or as demons that tempt human beings to their downfall. As a mystic of the highest order, it can be presumed that Zarathushtra understood the reality of things. Yet, since truth in this world is always relative to the limitations of human understanding concerning divine processes, and because – for practical purposes – one explanation is often as good as another, Zarathushtra may well have explained things in demon terminology, according to the religious and mythological beliefs of the people among whom he lived.

Human beings have always been easily deceived by the illusion of worldly knowledge and by the earnest clamour of teachers, scholars, priests, and other 'experts'. Zarathushtra therefore devotes one of his *Gāthās,* almost exclusively, to the *daēvas* and their ilk. Addressing them directly, he first distinguishes between the "Evil Mind *(Aka Manah)*" or "Deceiver *(Druj)*", which is the source of all negativity, and the creative power and intelligence of the Primal or Great Mind *(Vohu Manah)* of God *(Ahura Mazdā).* In this context, *daēvas* seem to be priests and worldly leaders:

But you, O *daēvas* all,
are the offspring of the Evil Mind *(Aka Manah),*
as, too, are those who follow you.
From the Deceiver *(Druj)* and from your selfish mind
spring all your double-dealing deeds.
You have become notorious for this,
throughout the seven regions of the world.

Your deeds have become so perverted
that men who live and act the worst,
are even called 'beloved of the *daēvas*';
Cutting themselves adrift from the Primal Mind *(Vohu Manah),*
turning aside from *Mazdā Ahura*'s will,
they wander far from the path of Truth *(Ashā).*

Thus have you cheated all mankind
of perfection *(haurvatāt)* and immortality *(ameretatāt);*
Through your own deceiving mind *(aka manah),*
the Evil Spirit *(Aka Mainyu),* with deceiving words,
has taught all this to you, O *daēvas* –
Promising power and fame to the followers of Untruth *(dregvants).*

Deluded in this way, a hardened sinner may at first prosper,
and some even high renown attain;
Yet, O *Ahura,* in Your Mind Supreme *(Vahishta Manah),*
all is remembered, and his true worth known;

For truly, *Mazdā,* where Your Power *(Xshathra)* extends,
and Your eternal Law *(Ashā),* there Your will prevails.
These sinners have no understanding of progress made by effort,
as is taught by life – the fiery test as some have called it.
Of such, O *Mazdā,* O *Ahura,* You know best their end.

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 32:3–7; cf. DSZ pp.260–71*

Becoming more specific, he goes on to talk of those who purport to teach other human beings, but actually lead them away from God and the spiritual purpose of life:

A false teacher distorts the scriptures,
and through his words obscures life's purpose,
robbing us of our own true heritage:
The precious realization of Your First Mind *(Vohu Manah).*...

Such persons, in these ways, corrupt our lives;
Dazzled by worldly grandeur,
they regard the worldly *(dregvants)*
as great lords and ladies of the earth;
Hindering the attainment of our life's true purpose,
holding back the followers of Truth *(ashavans),*
O *Mazdā,* from the Highest,
by the constant distractions of their minds.

These persons, through such teachings,
turn away mortals from the right path.
For them, *Mazdā* has decreed retribution;
They distract all souls with their alluring words,
so that in the place of Truth *(Ashā),* these wolves *(grēhma)*
and those who scramble after Untruth *(Druj)* are preferred.

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 32:9, 11–12; cf. DSZ pp.278, 285–88*

Nonetheless, even those who mistakenly lead others astray will one day seek the higher path through a God-sent "teacher of the Word *(Manthra)*":

Whatever power these wolves *(grēhma)* hope to attain
in the domain of the Worst Mind *(Acishta Manah)*
becomes the destroyer of their lives;
Yet even they, O *Mazdā,* shall each beg, long and yearningly,
for the message of Your teacher of the Word *(Manthra)* –
He who is ever vigilant against their threats to Truth *(Ashā).*

Since ancient times, these wolves *(grēhma),*
and likewise, too, the spiritually blind,
have directed all their aims and energies to ensnare him.
For help, they have enlisted the followers of Untruth *(dregvants),*
and have decreed death to spiritual life,
hoping they might rule the world.

Spiritually blind and deaf,
their plans are brought to nothing;
For those very ones whom they decreed
as unfit to rule or lead the world,
shall gain perfection and immortality,
being carried up by means of Your First Mind *(Vohu Manah).*

This is, indeed, the highest home – therefore, it is for us
to follow the true teaching of the Wise;
And even those, whose actions threaten me with hate,
are ever in Your hands, *Ahura.*
Therefore, I will restrain myself from responding to the hatred
of the followers of Untruth *(dregvants)* towards Your devotees.

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 32:13–16; cf. DSZ pp.292–303*

Though the meaning here is pretty clear, there are other verses where the sense is uncertain. In one, the *daēvas* seem to be evil demons:

They who, intending evil, build up hatred *(aēshma)* –
tongues wagging in cruel gossip,
hinderers among helpers,
evildoers, caring not for what is right –
Have become like *daēvas* (demons);
In their inner selves, they are followers of Untruth *(dregvants).*

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 49:4; cf. DSZ p.705*

In another passage, where "these two" are the positive and the negative spirits, the *daēvas* could refer either to gods, demons, or priests:

Of these two spirits, even the *daēvas* did not choose aright,
for the Deluder was close beside them, while they stood in doubt.
And thus they chose the Worst Mind *(Acishta Manah),*
and misled by him they hurried off to passion *(aēshma);*
Thus did they pollute this mortal life.

*Zarathushtra, Yasna 30:6; cf. DSZ p.148*

Another verse again casts the *daēvas* in a negative light, but here they could be any evil force – men or demons:

> How great Your Power, O *Mazdā!*
> Deeply do I yearn to serve,
> that I may be one with You, with Truth *(Ashā),*
> and with Your First Mind *(Vohu Manah).*
> Knowing that You protect Your devotees,
> we speak of You as far above all others,
> distinct from *daēvas* and from wicked men.
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 34:5; cf. DSZ p.365*

See also: **dregvant** (▸4).

**dà héshàng** (C), **daioshō** (J) *Lit.* great *(dà, dai)* monk *(héshàng, oshō);* senior monk, abbot; great venerable; an honorific used in *Zen* or Pure Land Buddhism for a great preceptor or high-ranking priest; a monk of great virtue and old age. The Buddha himself is sometimes referred to as Shākyamuni Buddha Daioshō.

See also: **oshō**.

**dāʿī Allāh** (A/P), **dāʿī al-Ḥaqq** (A), **dāʿī-yi Ḥaqq** (P) *Lit.* summoner *(dāʿī)* to God *(Allāh, al-Ḥaqq),* summoner to the Truth *(al-Ḥaqq), al-Ḥaqq* being a common name for *Allāh;* implies the Prophet Muḥammad as God's Messenger; hence, to some Sufis, an epithet of a *murshid* (master).

Rūmī says that answering the summons of the master brings the Water of Life to a soul who is on fire from the hell of the *nafs* (lower mind). According to a story he relates, the true believers, as they travel on their way to paradise on the Day of Judgment, see no trace of hell, although they do pass by a "garden of greenery". On asking their angel guide what has happened to hell, they are told that because they had "striven", and had turned their "fire of lust" into the "verdure of piety and the light of guidance", and their "fire of anger" into "forbearance", and their "fire of greed" into "unselfishness", they have effectively turned hell into a garden.[1] Ostensibly, he is speaking of Muḥammad and traditional Islamic belief, but from his many other observations on the subject, it is clear that he is speaking obliquely of the masters who 'summon' souls back to God. They are the ones, in Rūmī's writings, who bring the Water of Life to the souls of this world to quench the fire of their *nafs:*

Since you have answered the summoner to God *(dāʿī-yi Ḥaqq)*
and have brought Water
into the blazing hell of your soul *(nafs)* –
Hell, so far as you are concerned,
has become greenery and roses and plenty and riches.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2567–68; cf. MJR2 p.354*

See also: **Āb-i Ḥayāt** (3.1).

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:2553*ff., MJR2* pp.353–54.

**Dajjāl**, **al-** (A/P) *Lit.* the Deceiver; the Imposter, the Liar, the Charlatan, the Swindler; the Muslim Antichrist; also called *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl* ('the False Messiah') and the *Khar Dajjāl* ('Jackass Deceiver'), because in some accounts he rides on a donkey.

Various accounts of *al-Dajjāl* exist in Arabian and Muslim legend, differing in their details. Although *al-Dajjāl* is not mentioned in the *Qur'ān,* there are many *ḥadīth* (traditional sayings of the Prophet) that mention him, outlining the events leading up to the end of the world. It is believed that *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl* will come shortly before the end, his appearance being one of the signs that the end is nigh. A great many will follow him, but his coming will herald the advent of either Jesus or *al-Mahdī,* the rightly guided One who will destroy *al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl.* After that will come the Day of Judgment and the general Resurrection.

The *ḥadīth* also relate that *al-Dajjāl* will be refused entry to either Madīnah or Mecca; many nonbelievers will go to join him; he will appear to kill a believer outside Madīnah and then restore him to life, because he is actually unable to kill him; he is a brown, curly haired man, blind in his right eye, which looks like a swollen grape; he rides a camel; he will bring with him fire and water, but the water will actually be fire, and the fire will be fresh cold water;[1] his reign will last forty days, forty months, or forty years.[2] In some *ḥadīth,* it is said that there will be thirty *al-Dajjālūn.*[3]

Hujwīrī (C11th) provides another account:

> We are told on trustworthy authority that in the last days *Dajjāl* will come and will claim godship, and that two mountains will go with him, one on his right hand and the other on his left; and that the mountain on his right hand will be the place of felicity, and the mountain on his left hand will be the place of torment; and that he will call the people to himself, and will punish those who refuse to join him. But though he should perform a hundredfold amount of such extra-ordinary acts, no intelligent person would doubt the falsity of

his claim, for it is well known that God does not sit on an ass and is not blind.

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XIV:7, KMM p.283, KM p.224*

By adding a single dot over the last Arabic letter of *al-Masīḥ* (the Messiah), the word becomes *al-Masīkh* (the deformed). Hence some writers, in a word-play, have spoken of the Antichrist as *al-Masīkh al-Dajjāl* (the Deformed Deceiver). The slight change is used to symbolize how easy it is for the Truth to become Deception.

Rūmī likens false teachers to the Antichrist in a story in which the crafty vizier ("so full of guile that he could tie knots in water") of a Jewish king plots to sow discord and confusion among the Christians. First, he has the king cut off his ears and hands and tear his nose in order to convince the Christians that he had been exposed as a secret Christian. Then he gives contrary and jumbled doctrines to different Christian communities. Finally, he independently appoints each of the twelve Christian leaders as his sole successor, before committing suicide. Rūmī uses the story to illustrate how easily people are fooled not only by false teachers, but also by their own minds *(nafs).* Speaking of the vizier, he relates:

All the Christians gave their hearts to him:
how great, indeed, is the strength
of the blind conformity of the common man!
They planted love of him within their breasts:
they regarded him as the vicar of Jesus,
but inwardly, he was the accursed one-eyed Antichrist *(al-Dajjāl).*

O God, answer the cry of those who seek You –
for You are a good helper!
O God, there are myriads of snares and baits,
and we are like greedy, foodless birds.
From moment to moment we are caught in a fresh snare,
though we become, each one, a falcon or a *Sīmurgh.*
Every moment You deliver us,
and again we go to a snare, O You without want!

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:371–76; cf. MJR2 p.23*

1. *E.g. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 3:30.103–6; 4:55.553–54, 574, 649–50; 4:55.659; 5:59.685; 7:72.795, *HSB.*
2. *E.g. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 41:7023, *HSM.*
3. *E.g. Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 9:88.237; *Ḥadīth Sunan Abū Dāwūd* 37:4320, *HSD.*

**Dalai Lama** (T) *Lit.* ocean *(dalai)* superior one *(lama);* ocean teacher, ocean master; an honorific title for the high *lama* of the *Geluk* or Yellow Hat school of Tibetan Buddhism; regarded symbolically as a reincarnation of the *bodhisattva* of compassion, Chenrezig (known in India as Avalokiteshvara). Chenrezig is looked upon as the patron *bodhisattva* and founding father of Tibet. Among his other incarnations have been the Tibetan ruler Songtsän Gampo who introduced Buddhism into Tibet during the sixth or seventh century. The identification of Songtsän Gampo as a *chakravartin* (universal ruler) and incarnation of Avalokiteshvara first came to prominence in Buddhist texts of the eleventh century.

Although the *Dalai Lama* is often mistakenly regarded as the spiritual leader or *Ganden Tripa* ('Holder of the Golden Throne') of the *Geluk* school, the *Ganden Tripa* is actually a temporal seven-year appointment, and is not held for life. In fact, since the start of the fifteenth century, there have been one hundred and two *Ganden Tripas* and only fourteen *Dalai Lamas.* The most recent appointment was made in 2009.

According to Tibetan Buddhist lore, the *Dalai Lama* is a *tulku,* the incarnation or manifestation of a Tibetan *lama,* who is 'discovered', generally in childhood, and raised to inherit the position of his predecessor. The present and fourteenth *Dalai Lama* is thus believed to have successively reincarnated as the last thirteen *Dalai Lamas.* The tradition of the *tulku* as a serially reincarnating *lama* is a relatively recent innovation that evolved during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

*Dalai* is actually a Mongolian word meaning 'ocean', and the title was conferred upon the early *Geluk lama* Sönam Gyatso (1543–1588) in 1578 by Altan Khan, ruler of the western Mongol tribes. *Dalai* is a translation of the Tibetan *gyatso* (ocean), as a result of which Sönam Gyatso became known as the *Dalai Lama.* The title was then given posthumously to the first two *Dalai Lamas,* Gendüm Drup (1391–1474) and Gendüm Gyatso (1475–1541), who were regarded as Sönam Gyatso's previous incarnations. Sönam Gyatso thereby gained status as the third *Dalai Lama.*

The present and fourteenth *Dalai Lama* (Tenzin Gyatso) believes that Altan Khan did not intend to establish any particular title. *Dalai* was simply a part of the fuller Mongolian title in which Altan Khan used a wordplay on *gyatso.* According to the present *Dalai Lama:*

> Many writers have mistranslated *Dalai Lama* as 'Ocean of Wisdom'. The full Mongolian title, 'the wonderful *Vajradhara,* good splendid meritorious ocean', given by Altan Khan, is primarily a translation of the Tibetan words *sönam gyatso* (ocean of merit).
>
> *Tenzin Gyatso, in STCD p.142*

The title of *Dalai Lama* is rarely used by Tibetans, who use either *Gyalwa Rinpoche* ('Precious Victor'), *Kundun* ('Presence'), or *Yishin Norbu* ('Wish-fulfilling Jewel'), or *Jey Tamchey Khyenpa* ('All-Knowing Master'), a title by which the first two incarnations were known. *Dalai Lama,* however, was used for centuries by the Mongolians, from whom the Chinese subsequently adopted the title, and from whom it was picked up by the British.

Altan Khan is remembered for having established close ties with the Tibetan leader of the *Geluk* school. First invited to Mongolia in 1569, Sönam Gyatso initially sent a disciple in his place. Finally accepting the invitation in 1577, Sönam Gyatso never returned to Tibet, remaining in Mongolia to teach Buddhism, which in time became Mongolia's primary religious orientation.

Having converted to Buddhism, Altan Khan adopted Buddhism as the state religion of Mongolia, and the first Buddhist monastery in Mongolia (Thegchen Chonkhor) was built at his behest. In 1586, at the site of the former Mongolian capital of Karakorum, he also founded the Erdene Zuu monastery, which grew into a huge institution; by 1792, it contained sixty-two temples and housed around 10,000 *lamas.*

Altan Khan was a descendant of the legendary Kublai Khan (1215–1294). Kublai Khan was a Buddhist convert, and uniter of Mongolian tribes of the north and south, ruler of the Mongol Empire and self-appointed Emperor of China. Sönam Gyatso further cemented the relationship of religion and state by announcing that Altan Khan was a reincarnation of Kublai Khan, while he himself was a reincarnation of Drogön Chögyal Phagpa (1235–1280), the *lama* who had initiated Kublai Khan into tantric Buddhism. They had thus been once again reunited in order to promote the cause of Buddhism.

Aided by Altan Khan, Sönam Gyatso introduced many social and religious changes. These included the elimination of animal and blood sacrifices, destruction of the images of Mongolian deities, abolition of the immolation of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres, and an end to military action. Although Altan Khan died in 1582, only four years after meeting Sönam Gyatso, within fifty years the majority of Mongols had converted to Buddhism, tens of thousands had become monks, and an ambitious programme of translating Tibetan and Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Mongolian was well under way. Altan Khan was succeeded by his son, and it is perhaps no surprise that following the death of Sönam Gyatso in 1588, his reincarnation was 'discovered' to be Altan Khan's great-grandson, Yönten Gyatso, who thus became the fourth *Dalai Lama.*

The discovery, however, was not without opposition. The position of the *Dalai Lama* has always been closely related to politics, which in ancient times generally included violence. But as a Mongolian, he was unacceptable to many Tibetans, and a number of attempts were made to remove him from office,

especially by members of the *Kagyū* school of Tibetan Buddhism. At the age of ten, Yönten Gyatso left Mongolia and travelled to Lhasa together with his father, various Tibetan monks and officials, and a thousand Mongolian cavalry. He became a monk and later abbot at the Drepung monastery, which is very close to Lhasa. When he was sixteen, one of the Tibetan princes who supported the *Kagyūpa* invaded Lhasa and expelled the Mongolian cavalrymen. At the age of twenty-one, Yönten Gyatso was forced to flee when the monastery itself came under attack. Taking refuge in caves above the Sangyib Hot Springs, northeast of Lhasa, he died at the age of twenty-seven under suspicious circumstances. Some believe him to have been poisoned, although evidence is lacking.[1] Yönten Gyatso was succeeded by the fifth *Dalai Lama,* Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682), who established the political power of the lineage, assuming the role of head of the Tibetan state. Regarded as an astute political as well as religious leader, he oversaw an era of religious, social, and artistic strength.

For many centuries, the *Dalai Lamas* have exercised a tremendous spiritual and political influence in the region. They are also responsible for having written some notable Buddhist works:

> The *Dalai Lamas* have also functioned as the principal spiritual guide to many Himalayan kingdoms bordering Tibet, as well as Western China, Mongolia, and Ladakh. The literary works of the *Dalai Lamas* have, over the centuries, inspired more than fifty million people in these regions. Those writings, reflecting the fusion of Buddhist philosophy embodied in Tibetan Buddhism, have become one of the world's great repositories of spiritual thought.
>
> *Ardy Verhaegen, The Dalai Lamas, DLIH p.6*

The *Dalai Lama*'s dual role as religious and political leader continued until 2011 when the fourteenth *Dalai Lama* relinquished his status as head of the Tibetan government in exile, and proposed its transfer to an elected leader.[2] This change was effected and a *Sikyong* (effectively, prime minister) – elected in April 2011 and also stationed in Dharamsala – is now head of political and administrative affairs. The previous title of the 'prime minister' had been the *Kalon Tripa,* which was changed to *Sikyong* in September 2012 through a vote by the Tibetan government in exile. The *Kalon Tripa* had previously been subordinate to the *Dalai Lama.*

See also: **lama**, **tulku**.

1. See "4th Dalai Lama," *Wikipedia,* ret. April 2013.
2. For many of the above details, see "Dalai Lama" and "Altan Khan," *Wikipedia,* ret. April 2013.

**dalīl**, **dalīl-i Rāh**, **rahbar**, **rāhbar**, **rah-namā** (P) *Lit.* road *(rah, rāh)* guide *(dalīl);* road showing *(namā);* guide on the way *(rahbar),* guide on the path, one who guides the way; pilot, escort; spiritual guide or leader; in Sufism, the spiritual master who guides the souls or wayfarers *(rah-rav, sālik)* on the spiritual path; also, in a Sufi *khānaqāh* (monastery), the *pīr-i dalīl* (master-guide), who is the deputy master and second-in-command to the *shaykh.* His task is to teach the Sufi way and discipline to the disciples. There is a Sufi saying that the *shaykh* attracts while the *pīr-i dalīl* repels. The *shaykh* attracts through his lovingkindness, while the *pīr-i dalīl* repels through the strictures, rules and discipline required for their spiritual development.

Sufis regard a master or spiritual guide as essential:

> Set no foot upon the lane of love
> without a guide of the Way *(dalīl-i Rāh):*
> One with no guide *(rāhbar)* on this Path *(Rāh)* is lost.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.82, DIH p.168; cf. DHWC (207:5) p.385*

> Set no foot upon the lane of love
> without a guide of the Way *(dalīl-i Rāh):*
> I made a hundred efforts on my own,
> and failed to attain my desire.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.104, DIH p.195; cf. DHWC (184:8) p.352*

> Do not break with the prophet of your time:
> do not rely on your own skill and footsteps!
> Though you be a lion,
> when you travel the Way *(Rah)* without a guide *(dalīl),*
> you are a self-seeker – gone astray and contemptible.
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:542–43; cf. MJR4 p.302*

Having adopted such a guide, the disciple places all his trust in him, and none else:

> Go! Give me no advice, for my allegiance is reserved
> for the master of the magi *(pīr-i mughān),*
> my guide on this Way *(rāhbar).*
> *Unattributed, in Mir'āt-i 'Ushshāq, in TAT p.200; cf. in SSE4 p.166*

Yet the guide may seem to move the disciple along so fast that he begs for some respite:

> Move not so fast, O guide of the Way *(dalīl-i Rāh),*
> lest the weary-hearted fall to the rear of the caravan!
> *Furūghī Bisṭāmī, Ghazaliyāt, GFBA p.134, in FNI4 p.153; cf. in SSE4 p.167*

For the most part, a human being's guide on the path through life is their own thoughts. Rūmī says that to travel the path of life with only one's own ideas and opinions as a guide is foolhardy. It is like a person who tries to find his way at night, guided only by flashes of lightning. He stumbles around, hurting himself and getting hopelessly lost. And if, by chance, he comes across "the guide", he refuses to listen to the counsel he is given, because it would mean accepting that his approach was wrong, and would entail starting his journey again from the beginning:

Beware, do not travel
  save in the company of a wise instructor *(pīr).*
All selfish pleasures are a deceit and fraud:
  around the lightning flash is a wall of darkness.
The lightning is a brief gleam, false and fleeting,
  surrounded by darkness, and your way is long.
By its light you can neither read a letter
  nor ride to your destination.
But as a penalty for being enthralled by the lightning,
  the beams of sunrise withdraw themselves from you.
Mile after mile through the night,
  the lightning's deception leads you on,
  without a guide *(bī dalīl),* in a dark wilderness.
Now you fall on a mountain, now into a river;
Now you wander in this direction, now in that.
O seeker of worldly estate,
  you will never find the guide *(dalīl);*
Or if you find him, you will avert your face from him,
  saying, "I have travelled sixty miles on this road,
  and now this guide *(dalīl)* tells me I have lost my way.
If I give ear to this marvel,
  I must begin my journey again under his authority.
I have devoted my life to this journey:
  I will pursue it, come what may. Begone, O *khvājah* (cleric)!"

(He replies:) "Yes, you have journeyed far,
  but only in opinion, as insubstantial as lightning:
Come, make a tenth part of that journey
  for the sake of divine inspiration, as glorious as the sunrise.
You have read, 'Opinion cannot serve instead of truth,'[1]
  and yet, by a lightning flash such as that,
  you have been blinded to a rising sun.
Hark, come into our boat, O wretched man,
  or at least tie that boat of yours to this boat of ours."

But he replies, "Why should I abandon power and dominion?
Why should I follow you blindly?"

A blind man is certainly better off
with a guide *(rahbar)* than alone:
In the former case, there is only one ignominy,
while in the latter there are a hundred.
You are fleeing from a gnat to a scorpion,
you are fleeing from a dewdrop into an ocean.
You are fleeing from your father's unkindnesses
into the midst of scoundrels, and mischief, and trouble.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:4093–110; cf. MJR6 pp.484–85*

Rūmī depicts the saintly "guide" as the "shadow" and "servant of God", who "guides (souls) to the light of the divine Sun" through the "valley" of this world:

The shadow of God *(sāyah-'i Yazdān)*
is that servant of God *(bandah-'i Khudā)*
who is dead to this world and living through God.
Lay hold of his skirt most quickly without misgiving,
that you may be saved in the skirt (*i.e.* the end) of the Last Days.
(The shadow in) "How He extended the shadow"[2]
is the form of the saints *(awliyā'),*
which guides to the light of the divine Sun.
Do not enter this valley without this guide *(dalīl).*

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:423–26; cf. MJR2 p.26*

Rūmī also relates a brief story in which some devils who are seeking entrance to heaven are rejected. They are told to return to the world, to find the "earthly one" who knows the "secrets of the mystery", the "guide" who can give them the spiritual "pearls" they seek, to enter the house of God in the proper manner, through the correct door – with a spiritual guide *(dalīl):*

If you are seeking priceless pearls,
"Enter the houses by their doors."[3]
Keep knocking that door ring, and stand at the door. . . .
You need not take this long road:
we have bestowed on an earthly one the secrets of the mystery.
Come to him, if you are not disloyal:
be made sugarcane by him, though you are empty reeds."
That guide *(dalīl)* will cause greenery to grow from your earth. . . .
You will be made to flourish, you will be made fresh anew.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:3327–32; cf. MJR4 p.456*

See also: **hādī**, **pīr**.

1. *Qur'ān* 10:36.
2. *Qur'ān* 25:45.
3. *Qur'ān* 2:189.

**dancing dervishes** A name given to dervishes who combine ecstatic dance with their *samāʿ* (music sessions); commonly associated with the *Mawlawīyah* or *Mevlevī* dervishes who claim descent from Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

See also: **darvīsh**, **samāʿ** (▸3).

**daṇḍī** (S/H) *Lit.* of a staff *(daṇḍa);* a member of an order of *sannyāsins* (ascetics) of Shaivite traditions who carries a bamboo staff; an all-male order of *brāhmaṇs* (the highest Hindu caste) who trace their origins to the ninth-century *Advaita* (non-dual) philosopher Shankara; supporters of the caste system, they are generally regarded as orthodox *(rūḍhivādī),* and held in high esteem by conservative Hindus; known for their dedication to *Advaita* philosophy and their rigorous asceticism. The four traditional teachers of Shankara's philosophy (the 'four Shankarāchāryas') are always *daṇḍīs,* and are commonly asked to speak at pan-Hindu religious gatherings.

*Daṇḍīs* have generally fulfilled the obligations of the three earlier stages *(āshramas)* of Hindu life (student-celibate, householder, hermit) and are entering the fourth – that of the wandering *sannyāsin.* At the time of their initiation, they are given a staff, which they are to ensure should never touch the ground. When they die, they are buried with their staff. In common with the majority of Indian spiritual groups, life in *daṇḍī* monasteries *(maṭhs)* focuses around a *guru.* Although difficult to gauge the numbers of a predominantly wandering community, during the late 1970s there were probably around 500 to 1,000 *daṇḍīs* in India, of whom two to three hundred were in Vārāṇasī at any one time, comprising about one fifth of all the *sādhus* in that city.[1]

1. See B.R. Hertel, C.A. Humes, D.W. Sawyer, *Living Banaras, LBHR* pp.11–12, 159–80.

**dàodéjiā**, **dàojiàotú** (C) *Lit.* a Daoist; a follower of Daoism.

The establishment of Daoism as a spiritual path and religion is traditionally linked to the earliest Daoist scripture, the *Dàodé jīng* (C6th BCE). Attributed to the old master, Lǎozǐ, this book of eighty-one concise chapters teaches a code of living that had been practised in China since more ancient times.

In order to attune his own *dé* (nature, characteristics, virtue) to that of the *Dào,* the *dàodéjiā* adopts this code of living, which is characterized by *wúwéi* (noncontrivance, noncontention), *zìrán* (naturalness, spontaneity), and *pǔ* (simplicity).

The *dàodéjiā* pursues a path to ultimate oneness with *Dào* by carrying out spiritual practices taught to him by an enlightened master – a living master who has himself attained that union, through the same age-old and attested methods.

See also: **Daoism** (1.13).

**dàogū** (C) *Lit.* lady of the *Dào;* maiden of the *Dào;* a resident of a convent or a laywoman who leads a devout religious life; a Daoist priestess; a Daoist nun. See **chūjiārén**.

**dàorén** (C) *Lit.* person *(rén)* of *Dào;* a diligent seeker of *Dào;* a Daoist devotee, not necessarily referring only to advanced Daoist practitioners.

The *dàorén* is described as one who remains detached from the world while working to liberate his spirit *(shén)* from its bondage to the body *(shēn)* and mind *(xīn):*

> Lǎozǐ said: "Although people live in the world, their thinking should not rest with the world; although people live in a country, their thinking should not rest with the country; although people live in a village, their thinking should not rest with the village; although people live in a family, their thinking should not rest with the family. Although the spirit *(shén)* lives in the body *(shēn),* the spirit *(shén)* should not rest with the body *(shēn).* Whoever practises this can be called a *dàorén* (devotee of *Dào*)."
>
> *Xīshēng jīng 5:14a–b; cf. TMPS p.252*

The mind of a *dàorén* should at all times be focused on this goal, regardless of whatever activity he may be involved in. He should be in full control of his faculties and should be non-judgmental.

The *dàorén* walks the path of oneness with *Dào,* and does not allow himself to be affected by the ups and downs that are inherent in the duality of material existence, because he leaves all of that behind. He similarly leaves behind another aspect of duality – extremes of emotion; he avoids passing judgment ("freezes his feelings") by sustaining a higher level of inner consciousness and awareness ("in cosmic space"). With the attention always directed towards the *Dào,* the *dàorén* leads a simple life that helps him towards successful meditation, which in turn leads to awareness of the *Dào* within:

> Students of the *Dào (xué dàorén)* should have their minds on the *Dào* at all times, no matter what they are doing.
>
> When they walk, they set foot on the path of evenness *(tǎntú);* when they stand still, they freeze their feelings in cosmic space *(tàixū).*
>
> When they sit *(zuò),* they tune the breathing in the nose; when they recline, they embrace the jewel below the navel.
>
> Eventually the tune of the breathing is unbroken, and you are like an imbecile *(yú)* all day long.
>
> This is correct practice *(gōng)* – it has nothing to do with contrived observances.
>
> *Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù 10a–b; cf. TMED pp.110–11*

The "jewel below the navel" refers to the nascent purity of the soul that is recovered through spiritual cultivation; being "like an imbecile" refers to being in the unselfconscious, blissful state of enlightenment. When sitting in meditation, the *dàorén* reaches a state of tranquillity characterized externally by smooth and rhythmic breathing.

See also: **dàodéjiā**.

**dàoshì** (C) *Lit. Dào* specialist *(shì);* a Daoist priest or priestess; an ordained Daoist cleric; a master of the *Dào,* a dignitary of the *Dào;* a Daoist scholar; a Daoist teacher or master; informally called *wūtóu* (black heads), after their distinctive official headdress; a Daoist monk.

Prior to the sixth century, *dàoshì* meant simply 'practitioner' or 'wayfarer', but from the sixth century onwards, it came to refer to a Daoist priest or priestess. All *dàoshì* are properly trained and ordained (or initiated) by a Daoist master under the auspices of a recognized and reputable Daoist order. In modern usage, *dàoshì* refers collectively to all Daoist monastics, but it is also used specifically for monks, while nuns are referred to as *dàogū.*

The *dàoshì* perform various liturgies, rites and rituals, and are believed capable of communicating with inner deities *(língyì).* During their practices, they appeal to one or more of these deities for assistance in healing, dispelling demons *(guài),* and providing protection against sickness, poverty, evil spirits, and so forth. They also appeal to these deities to guide the souls of the dead through the netherworlds, and to elevate those souls to higher regions.

In present-day China, the leading priesthoods are those of the *Quánzhēn* and *Zhèngyī* schools of Daoism, each having differing rules governing the life of a *dàoshì. Dàoshì* of the *Quánzhēn* school, prevalent in northern China, are vegetarian, celibate, and live under strict disciplinary rules in temples – the most renowned of which is the Báiyún Guàn ('White Cloud Temple') in Beijing. *Quánzhēn dàoshì* must perform frequent fasts and must comply with

a strict moral code, which includes precepts against killing, lying, stealing, eating meat, and drinking alcohol.

By contrast, *dàoshì* of the *Zhèngyī* school, prevalent in southern China, may eat meat, and may marry and live in their own homes, usually near a monastery. Most of the *Zhèngyī* priests are part-time, as they may have other jobs.

In both these schools, students commence their studies when very young – in earlier times this would often be before their teens. Similarly, in both schools, the *dàoshì* have liturgical functions that define their position. Each learns to speak a secret language understood only by other *dàoshì,* its vocabulary comprising a variety of metaphors, code words, specialized terms (names of rites *etc.*), and so on. To make the language even more unintelligible to ordinary people, they speak to each other in a dialect similar to that of Jiāngxī province, where the Mountain of the Dragon and the Tiger, home of the heavenly masters, is located.

For the most part, there is gender equality between male and female *dàoshì:* they are ordained in the same way, dress in similar official vestments, and perform similar public roles. Socially, *dàoshì* belong to the same class as local leaders.

See also: **chūjiārén**, **dàozhǎng**, **fǎshī**.

**dàozhǎng** (C) *Lit. Dào* chief, head, or elder *(zhǎng);* a dignitary of the *Dào;* an ordained *dàoshì* (priest or priestess) who is qualified to conduct liturgies and supervise religious practices, ceremonies and rituals *(lǐ)* in the local community, such as *zhāi* (retreats) and *jiào* (offerings).

The necessary ritual vestments and implements, texts and scriptures, paintings and musical instruments are all kept in the home of the *dàozhǎng,* which is temporarily transformed into a ritual space at certain times or occasions. At such times, the *dàozhǎng* will conduct daily morning services before a shrine dedicated to one or more deities and will perform minor rites and ceremonies for clients.

Whenever a 'client' requests a major ritual to be conducted either at their own home or at a shrine, the visiting *dàozhǎng* functions as a *gāogōng* (high priest), enlisting colleagues and musicians to assist in the performance of the required ritual.

See also: **dàoshì**, **fǎshī**.

**dar** (P), **bāb** (A) (pl. A. *abwāb,* P. *abvāb*) *Lit.* door, gate, entrance; in Sufi terminology, the inner door, at which a devotee gathers his concentration, meets the divine beloved, and gains entry to the spiritual worlds; also, an epithet

given to some Sufi masters and other Islamic spiritual leaders, as with the nineteenth-century Iranian, Mīrzā ʿAlī Muḥammad, generally known as *al-Bāb,* who declared himself to be the hidden *imām* who will herald the end of the world, awaited by *Shīʿahs;* also, an epithet of Muḥammad's cousin, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Because ʿAlī is regarded by *Shīʿahs* as the first *imām,* the senior authorized disciple of the *imām* in early Shiʿism was also called the *Bāb.* Even in a secular context, the ministerial department of the Grand Vizier was known as *Bāb-i ʿĀlī.* According to a *ḥadīth:*

> I (Muḥammad) am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is the *bāb.*
>
> *Ḥadīth, Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr, JMH1 p.107; Kunūz al-Ḥaqāʾiq, KHH p.38; TPA1 (30) p.45*

Alluding to this *ḥadīth,* one of Rūmī's fictional characters addresses ʿAlī as if he were a saint who takes the "husks" (human beings) to reach the "kernel" (God):

> "Since you are the gate *(bāb)* of the city of knowledge,
> since you are the beams of the sun of forbearance,
> O gate *(bāb),* be open to him who seeks the (inner) gate *(bāb),*
> so that by means of you the husks may reach the kernel.
> Be open unto everlasting, O gate of mercy *(bāb-i raḥmat),*
> O entrance hall to "None is like unto Him."[1]
>
> Truly, every speck is a place to see God,
> but who says, "Yonder is a door *(dar),*"
> when it is left unopened?
> Unless a watcher (saint) opens a door *(dar),*
> this idea never stirs within a person.
> When a door *(dar)* is opened,
> then that person becomes amazed,
> grows wings, and begins to fly on the idea.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:3763–68; cf. MJR2 p.204*

Rūmī explains that the saint, the friend, is a door to Reality for the disciple. The scholar finds the knowledge he seeks in books, but, for the mystic, the gateway to the gnosis he seeks is the saint whose heart is "white as snow", where "moonbeams" of the divine light arise:

> The presence of the friend *(yār)* is a book, and more.
> The *ṣūfī*'s book is not of ink and letters:
> it is nothing but a heart white as snow.
> The scholar's provision is pen marks:
> and the *ṣūfī*'s provision? – Footmarks.

He (the *ṣūfī*) stalks the game, like a hunter:
he sees the musk deer's track and follows the footprints. . . .
The heart that is the rising place of moonbeams
is the opening of the doors *(abvāb)* (of Reality) for the gnostic.
To you it is a wall, to them it is a door *(dar):*
to you a stone, to those venerated ones a pearl.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī II:158–66; cf. MJR2 p.230*

See also: **dar** (▸3).

1. *Qur'ān* 112:4.

**dàrén** (C) *Lit.* an adult, a grown-up; a title of respect for superiors; a great *(dà)* man *(rén),* the ideal man of ancient Chinese religion and traditional Chinese thought; in Daoism, an accomplished or perfected person who has transcended everything to do with the physical plane; one who is close to or at the stage of sagehood (realization of *Dào*).

In very early writings, *dàrén* referred to the sage-ruler or to the entirely spiritual sage, and was also used for the ruler, king or emperor of China, whose role as head of state was – or was expected to have been – to rule with the wisdom of a sage.

The earliest appearance of the term *dàrén* can be found in the oracle of the fifth line of the first hexagram in the *Yìjīng* (*qián,* symbolizing creative heaven):

'The dragon *(fēilóng)* is on the wing in the sky *(tiān)*' –
the great man *(dàrén)* rouses himself to his work.

*Yìjīng 1, SBE16 p.267; cf. SBE16 p.57*

And the term is explained:

The great man *(dàrén)* is one who is in harmony with heaven and earth in all his attributes. He is one with the sun and the moon in his brightness. He joins the four seasons in his orderly proceedings. He is in accordance with the spirit-like operations of providence – with all that is fortunate and calamitous. He may precede heaven, and heaven will not act in opposition to him. He may follow heaven, but will act only as heaven itself would at the time. If heaven will not act in opposition to him, how much less will ordinary people?

*Yìjīng, Wényánzhuàn, ECMK p.97*

Because he combines mystical experience with his work as a ruler, the *dàrén* evolves into a unique combination of the otherwise distinct roles of king

*(wáng),* shaman *(wū),* and sage *(shèng),* thereby endowing his country with peace and harmony:

> He whose goodness *(shí)* is abundant and is brilliantly displayed is called a great *(dà)* man. When one is great *(dà)* and is completely transformed *(huà)* into goodness itself, he is called a sage *(shèng).* When a sage is beyond our knowledge, he is called a man of spirit *(shén).*
>
> *Mèngzǐ 7b:25; cf. SBCP p.82*

From the fifth century BCE, the *dàrén* is portrayed as the spiritually evolved and aware person, who is both greater and more powerful than all living things – able to go beyond the known world. He achieves the pinnacle of realization, but is still available to his people. He helps humankind in the physical world; he can also help sincere seekers to realize their own highest spiritual potential. His whole being blends with *Dào,* which is selfless. Thus the *dàrén* studies *Dào* and purifies his mind (makes his mind 'no-mind'), so that his spirit can merge with *Dào:*

> The great man *(dàrén)* passes freely in and out of the boundless; he is as ageless as the sun and the moon. His face and body merge with the Great One; like the Great One, he is without self.
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 11, ECMK p.98*

In an anecdote related in the *Zhuāngzǐ* (C4th BCE), Ruò (the Spirit of the Ocean, the master) describes the characteristics of a *dàrén* to Hébó (the Spirit of the River, the disciple):

> The truly great man *(dàrén)* does not injure others and does not credit himself with charity and mercy. He seeks not gain, but does not despise the servants who do. He struggles not for wealth, but does not lay great value on his modesty. He asks for help from no man, but is not proud of his self-reliance; neither does he despise the greedy. He acts differently from the vulgar crowd, but does not place high value on being different or eccentric; nor because he acts with the majority does he despise those that flatter a few. The ranks and emoluments of the world are to him no cause for joy; its punishments and shame no cause for disgrace. He knows that right and wrong cannot be distinguished, that great and small cannot be defined.
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 17, WCI pp.684–85*

Ruò concludes his description of the *dàrén* by quoting a saying that refers to the mental attitude of a *dàorén,* an attitude epitomized by humility and

selflessness. Having spiritually evolved beyond the duality that characterizes the physical plane, the *dàrén* does not distinguish between right and wrong, or between good and evil; neither does he worry about himself nor entertain judgment of others. Being in a state of spiritual perfection, he remains aloof:

> I have heard say, "The man of *Dào (dàorén)* has no (concern for) reputation; the truly virtuous has no (concern for) possessions; the truly great man *(dàrén)* ignores self." This is the height of self-discipline.
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 17, WCI pp.684–85*

In another fable from the *Zhuāngzǐ,* Huángdì (the Yellow Emperor) explains to a seeker that the Daoist practitioner puts less and less attention into worldly activities. Yet, because he attends to his spiritual practice, everything that needs to be done gets done 'of itself'. Huángdì further explains that people who have become entangled in the world (have "already become 'things'") have a long, hard way to go if they are to return to their source or "root", the *Dào.* On the other hand, the *dàrén,* who has made a firm commitment to pursuing his spiritual practice, is already well on the way to success:

> So it is said, "He who practises the *Dào* does less every day; does less and goes on doing less, until he reaches the point where he does nothing *(wúwéi);* does nothing, and yet there is nothing that is not done."
>
> Now that we've already become 'things *(wù)*', if we want to return again to the root *(gēn),* I'm afraid we'll have a hard time of it! The great man *(dàrén)* – he's the only one who might find it easy.
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 22, CWCT p.235*

The *dàrén* sincerely follows the age-old spiritual practices taught to him by his own master, and his sincerity can be seen in his focus on the objective. The person who "does less every day" is the one who contrives less and less. He no longer contrives or contends for personal gain, either by acting when he need not, or by acting in a way that he should not, or by not acting when he should. This is referred to as *wúwéi* (noncontrivance, noncontention). The writer of this chapter also explains that the more worldly a person becomes as a result of mundane conditioning and involvement, the more difficult it becomes to realize his true spiritual nature.

Having attained sagehood, the *dàrén* regards heaven and earth equally. He extends his beneficent influence to all under the sky; yet, because he is self-deprecating, few know much about him or about the source of his spiritual power. In fact most people do not recognize him for what he truly is, because he has no interest in receiving any acknowledgement, let alone worldly fame:

> The sage *(shèngrén)* holds both heaven and earth (in equal regard) and his benign influence reaches out to all below heaven, yet we know nothing of his background.
>
> So it is that he has no official title while he is alive and no eulogies when he is dead. His reality is not known and labels do not stick to him: this characterizes the great man *(dàrén).*
>
> A dog is not thought special just because it can bark, and no man is thought wise just because he can speak; even less is he thought to be great. Anyone who thinks he is great is not to be counted as such, nor seen as virtuous. Nothing is greater than heaven and earth, but they do not seek greatness. One who knows what it is to be great does not go looking for it, does not lose it nor reject it, and doesn't change his opinions in order to be great. He turns inward and finds what is without end. He follows the ancient ways and finds what never dies. This is the sincerity *(chéng)* of the great man *(dàrén).*
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 24; cf. CTMP p.218*

The *dàrén* considers his spiritual practice as his paramount duty and protects his spiritual accomplishments both from view as well as from any diminution:

> The great man *(dàrén)* harbours his clarity and stores his brilliance *(huī)* in preparation of complete perfection. He concentrates his spirit *(shén)* and treasures his breath *(qì),* studies the *Dào* and makes his mind no-mind, so that his spirit can merge with the *Dào.* This truly is realizing the *Dào.* The *Dàodé jīng* says: "He who is identified with the *Dào,* the *Dào* is also happy to have him."[1]
>
> *Sīmǎ Chéngzhēn, Zuòwànglùn 7:15a, SSTK p.109*

In daily life, the *dàrén* goes about as if he were an ordinary person. He accepts other people's ideas willingly, while not forcing his own opinions on others; he is receptive and accepting of the world, and has no wish to dominate. The *Zhuāngzǐ* sees this as being a 'complementary' way of going about things, just as the four seasons have their own characteristics, yet complement each other to fulfil the cycle of a whole year:

> The great man *(dàrén)* shows his greatness by combining all the common aspects of humanity. So when ideas come to him from outside, he can receive them but does not cling to them. Likewise, when he brings forth some idea from within himself, they are like guides to those around, but they do not seek to dominate.
>
> (In the same way as) the four seasons each have their own original life *(qì),* and heaven does not discriminate, so the cycle is fulfilled.
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 25, CTMP pp.231–32*

Having a superior spiritual consciousness, the *dàrén* transcends time so that "a single morning" in higher realms could be "a thousand years" on earth. He looks upon any place in the world ("the eight wilds") as his home; the sun and moon, being permanent, become ever-present windows in his house. Not being attached to anything, the *dàrén* transcends the hustle and bustle of the world and of humanity, and is therefore truly free:

> There is master great man *(dàrén)* –
>
> He takes heaven and earth as a single morning,
> a thousand years as one short moment.
> The sun and the moon are windows for him,
> the eight wilds are his garden.
>
> He travels *(xíng)* without wheels or tracks,
> sojourns *(jū)* without house or hearth.
> He makes heaven his curtain and earth his seat,
> indulges in what he pleases.
>
> *Liú Líng, Jiǔdé sòng, Wénxuǎn, ECMK p.105*

This last verse refers to the *dàrén*'s preference for inner spiritual travel over earthly travel (he "indulges in what he pleases"). Able to go within at will, the *dàrén* traverses inner regions without any material aid, while still living in an earthly body.

In both daily life and spiritual practice, the *dàrén* behaves in an entirely natural and spontaneous way, not wishing to be in the least bit tied down by formality or convention, for this would restrict his spiritual progress:

> The ways of the great man *(dàrén)* may not be gauged by any routine formula. He arrives at his object in his own way, and that is all about it. As Guǎnzǐ remarks: "An owl will not get to its destination if its wings are tied."
>
> *Huáinánzǐ 12, TGLE p.137*

According to the *Wénzǐ* (*c.*200 BCE), the *dàrén* can also exert a subtle "spiritual influence" on ordinary folk without being physically present. In this way he brings about a change for the better in humanity. A positive change in behaviour ("customs") leads to a positive change in consciousness:

> So great people *(dàrén)*…travel the four seas without leaving their houses – changing customs so that people change for the better, in such a manner that it seems as if it came from themselves. Such are

> those who are capable of exercising spiritual influence (*shénhuà,* to make divine).
>
> *Wénzǐ 2, WTUM p.20*

Elsewhere, the *Wénzǐ* alludes to the damage done by ordinary people to nature and to the environment, even in earlier times. Being out of step with the *Dào,* mankind is out of step with his true nature, which is that of the *Dào.* The loss of this vital link, this 'interconnectedness', is reflected in humanity's lack of sensitivity towards nature and the environment. The *Wénzǐ* seems to predict a certain polarization of spirituality and science, warning that "the sacred and the miraculous cannot be fabricated artificially by knowledge and cannot be forced to happen by exertion of strength." Nature's response to being 'messed with' is witnessed in the present day by unusual and unexpected extremes of weather. The *Wénzǐ* indicates these probabilities and thus emphasizes the benefits of the wisdom of the *dàrén,* pointing out that by "embracing the mind of heaven and the energy of earth", he avoids even the slightest risk of going against nature:

> If we oppose heaven and are violent toward beings, then the sun and moon will be eclipsed, the stars will deviate from their courses, the four seasons will impinge upon one another, days will be dark and nights will be light, mountains will crumble and rivers dry up; there will be thunderstorms in winter and frost in summer.
>
> Heaven and humanity have interconnections *(xiāngtōng).*... Myriad beings have interconnections *(xiānglián).*... (The) sacred and miraculous cannot be fabricated artificially by knowledge, and cannot be forced to happen by exertion of strength.
>
> So great people *(dàrén)* join virtues *(dé)* with heaven and earth, join lights *(míng)* with sun and moon, join hearts (*líng,* spirit) with ghosts and spirits, and join trustworthiness *(xìn)* with the four seasons. Embracing the mind of heaven and the energy *(qì)* of earth, they hold to harmony *(hé)* and absorb its peace.
>
> *Wénzǐ 2, TCC1 p.170*

Here, the *Wénzǐ* issues a call to everyone to find the spirit *(shén)* within and, like the *dàrén,* to realize that they are an integral part of the whole, of the *Dào.*

See also: **shèng**, **xiān**, **zhēnrén**, **zhīrén**.

1. Lǎozǐ, *Dàodé jīng* 23, in *SSTK* p.109.

**darvesh**, **darvīsh** (P) (pl. *darvīshān*) *Lit.* one who comes to the door (to beg); commonly anglicized as 'dervish'; said by some to be a corruption of the

Persian, *darvīz,* from *dar-āvīz* ('door' + 'clinging to', one who clings to the door); thus, one who begs from door to door; a beggar; said by others to be a corruption of *daryūz* (one who seeks a door), *yūz* meaning a hunter or a seeker; pronounced by some as *'durvīsh',* implying pearl-like *(dur-vash),* to distinguish between an ordinary beggar and one who is a genuine mystic; one who has renounced the world; a Muslim renunciate; a name used for a member of some Sufi orders; a Sufi, some of whom are itinerant and without possessions; symbolically, a real seeker of the Divine, a faithful lover who remains at the door of the divine beloved; one who is 'poor' in regard to self, who has annihilated his self, who possesses nothing of 'his own'; one who is following the spiritual path *(ṭarīqah)* under the guidance of a *shaykh* (master); also called a *faqīr* (from *faqr,* poverty); generally applied to all Sufi orders, although in western Iran, the *Naqshbandī,* who are more closely associated with the orthodox tradition, are known as *ṣūfīs,* while the *Qādirī,* who are less inclined to material possessions, and practise *samā'* (Sufi ecstatic dancing), are known as *darvīshān.*[1]

Many Sufis have attempted to define a *darvīsh:*

> The dervish *(darvīsh)* is someone who has neither the world nor the hereafter, nor does he covet either, for they are too paltry for his heart to relate to them.
>
> *Kharaqānī, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 2, TAN2 p.235, in SSE6 p.104*

> In *ṣūfī* terminology, the dervish *(darvīsh)* is one whose heart receives the lights of divine manifestations, in the radiance of which he becomes annihilated and subsistent in God's subsistence.
>
> *Lāhījī, Sharḥ-i Gulshan-i Rāz, SGR p.171; cf. in SSE6 p.104*

> The dervishes *(darvīshān)* are a community to whose garments thorns from the tree of envy never stick. In the folds of their cloaks of Islam, dust from the wilderness of the *nafs* (lower self) never gathers, nor does smoke from the pit of the passions ever dim their eyes. Dressed as beggars, they are the kings of the Way, angelic qualities in the form of men who stride gracefully along the way of their annihilation.
>
> *Maybudī, Kashf al-Asrār, KA10 p.60, in SSE6 p.104*

The creed of the *darvīsh* is contentment and submission to God:

> The outward appearance of a dervish is a patched robe and a shaved head, but inwardly his heart is living and his *nafs* (lower self) is dead.... The way of dervishes *(darvīshān)* is praying, gratitude, service, obedience, almsgiving, contentment, professing the unity of God, trust, submission, and patience. Whoever possesses these qualities is really a

> dervish *(darvīsh),* although he may wear an elegant robe; whereas a prattler – who neglects his prayers, is luxurious, sensual, turns day into night in the bondage of lust, and night into day in the sleep of carelessness, eats whatever he gets, and speaks whatever comes upon his tongue – is a profligate, although he may wear the habit of a dervish *('abā').*
>
> *Sa'dī, Gulistān, Story 2:47, KSSS p.31; cf. GRG pp.145–46*

In a lengthy chapter in *Kashf al-Maḥjūb,* Hujwīrī lays out the ground rules for the life of a dervish. They may be householders or itinerants:

> Dervishes *(darvīshān)* are divided into two classes: residents *(muqīmān)* and travellers *(musāfirān).* According to the custom of the *shaykhs,* the travelling dervishes *(musāfirān)* should regard the resident ones *(muqīmān)* as superior to themselves because they go to and fro in their own interest, while the resident dervishes *(muqīmān)* have settled down in the service of God: in the former is the sign of search, in the latter is the token of attainment; hence those who have found and settled down are superior to those who are still seeking.
>
> Similarly, the resident dervishes *(muqīmān)* ought to regard the travelling ones as superior to themselves, because they are laden with worldly encumbrances, while the travelling dervishes *(musāfirān)* are unencumbered and detached from the world.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIII, KMM p.443, KM p.340*

Hujwīrī goes on to provide ample details of the hospitality and companionship to be offered to a visiting itinerant dervish, which, however, hold good only insofar as the traveller's attention is focused entirely on the quest for God, and should stop short of gratifying his personal desires in matters of food, and so on. Rules for the traveller are also provided:

> When a dervish *(darvīsh)* chooses to travel, not to reside, he ought to observe the following rules. In the first place, he must travel for God's sake, not for pleasure, and as he journeys outwardly, so he should flee inwardly from his sensual affections; and he must always keep himself in a state of purity and not neglect his devotions; and his object in travelling must be either pilgrimage or war (against infidels) or to see a (holy) site or to derive instructions or to seek knowledge or to visit a venerable person, a *shaykh,* or the tomb of a saint; otherwise his journey will be faulty. And he cannot do without a patched frock, and a prayer rug, and a bucket, and a rope, and a pair of shoes or clogs, and a staff: the patched frock to cover his nakedness, the prayer rug to pray on, the bucket to cleanse himself with, and the staff to protect himself from attacks and for other purposes.

> Before stepping on the prayer rug he must put on his shoes or clogs in a state of purity. If anyone carries other articles, for the sake of keeping the *Sunnah* (Muslim tradition), such as a comb and nail scissors and a needle and a little box of antimony, he does right. If, however, anyone provides himself with more utensils than those which have been mentioned, we have to consider in what station he is: if he is a novice every article will be a shackle and a stumbling block and a veil to him, and will afford him the means of showing self-conceit, but if he is a firmly grounded adept, he may carry all these articles and more.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIII, KMM pp.449–50; cf. KM pp.345–46*

Hujwīrī details many other rules for the itinerant *darvīsh* regarding the acceptance of hospitality. He should remove his left shoe before his right shoe, and put them on again in the reverse order. He should also wash his right foot before his left. He must go visiting with his host, if requested, though he should not enjoy it. He should not quarrel with his hosts, nor speak ill of any of his brothers. Moreover:

> He must not in any case interfere with the residents, or behave immoderately towards anyone, or talk of the hardships which he may have suffered in travelling, or discourse on theology, or tell anecdotes, or recite traditions in company, for all this is a sign of self-conceit. He must be patient when he is vexed by fools and must tolerate their irksomeness for God's sake, for in patience there are many blessings.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIII, KMM p.452, KM p.347*

Hujwīrī also lists and discusses numerous and diverse rules and opinions concerning formalities, manners and conduct regarding eating, walking, sleeping, speaking, and begging among dervishes. Regarding food, they "should unselfishly share their food with one another, and when seated at the table they should not be silent, and should begin by saying, 'In God's name'." Walking alone and with others should be done "circumspectly, with the head bowed in meditation *(murāqabat),* not looking in any direction but in front". Concerning sleeping, he advises, "Sleep is the brother of death," and, "If there were any good in sleep there would be sleep in paradise." Of speech and silence, he observes, "Speech is like wine: it intoxicates the mind, and those who begin to have a taste for it cannot abstain from it." When it comes to begging, "As far as possible they should beg only of God, for begging involves turning away from God to another, and when a man turns away from God there is danger that God may leave him in that predicament." And lastly, concerning marriage and celibacy, he counsels, "Marriage is permitted to all men and women, and is obligatory on those who cannot abstain from what is unlawful.... Some of the *ṣūfī shaykhs* hold marriage to be desirable

as a means of quelling lust, and acquisition of sustenance to be desirable as a means of freeing the mind from anxiety."[2]

Not all Sufis considered such rules necessary. Ḥāfiẓ says that there is no need for a dervish to wander about. Everything is inside, and all that is required is a quiet place to sit in meditation:

> O dervish *(darvīsh),* travel no more
> from the abode of the true beloved:
> A corner in the *khānaqāh* (monastery) is sufficient
> for spiritual wayfaring.
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.141, DIH p.248; cf. DHWC (314:2) p.544*

The dervish vow of poverty is encapsulated in a number of dervish sayings and maxims:

> It has been said that ten dervishes *(darvīsh)* may sleep under the same blanket, but that one country cannot hold two *pādshāhs* (emperors).
> *Sa'dī, Gulistān, Story 1:3, GRG p.76*

> "Do not beg unless you are starving. The Caliph 'Umar flogged a man who begged after having satisfied his hunger. When compelled to beg, do not accept more than you need."
>
> "Be good-natured and uncomplaining, and thank God for your poverty."
>
> "Do not flatter the rich for giving, nor blame them for withholding."
>
> "Dread the loss of poverty more than the rich man dreads the loss of wealth."
>
> "Take what is voluntarily offered: it is the daily bread which God sends to you; do not refuse God's gift."
>
> "Let no thought of the morrow enter your mind, else you will incur everlasting perdition."
>
> "Do not make of God a means to catch alms."
> *Maxims for Dervishes; cf. in MOI pp.38–39*

Rūmī has much to say on the subject. There is a difference, he observes, between the true dervish and one who has simply learnt the external language of spirituality. Those who have learnt the language may still know little or nothing of its inner reality:

> Even if a man learns the cry of the hoopoe,
> the mystery of the hoopoe still remains. . . .
> Distinguish the natural cry from the artificial one,
> the crown of kings from the crest of hoopoes.

Such shameless persons have attached to their tongues
the speech of dervishes *(darvīshān)*
and the deep sayings of gnostics *('ārifān).*
*Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1701–3; cf. MJR4 p.366*

Simply possessing the external appearance of a holy man does not confer spiritual understanding:

How should one who has the appearance of a dervish *(darvīsh)*
taste of that purity?
It is spiritual Reality, not mere intellectual proofs.
*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:160; cf. MJR6 p.266*

Because it is so difficult to judge the inside from externals, Rūmī offers few pointers for distinguishing the true and the false. He does point out, however, that a dervish who "wants bread", who wants payment of any kind from his followers, cannot be a true dervish or saint:

He is the mere picture of a dervish *(darvīsh),*
he is not worthy of bread (divine grace):
Do not throw bread to the picture of a dog!
He wants a morsel of food, he does not want God:
do not set dishes before a lifeless picture!
The dervish *(darvīsh)* that wants bread is a land fish:
he has the form of a fish, but flees from the sea.
He is a chicken, not the *Sīmurgh* of the air:
he swallows sweet morsels, he does not eat from God.
He loves God for the sake of gain:
his soul is not in love with God's excellence and beauty.
*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:2752–56; cf. MJR2 p.150*

A dervish *(darvīsh)* is not he who seeks bread –
a dervish *(darvīsh)* is he who gives his soul *(jān).*
*Rūmī, Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz, Rubā'īyāt 600, KSD8 p.102; cf. TSR p.462 (n.90)*

Spiritually speaking, the true "beggar" is one who has become completely detached from the body and "worldly goods", not one who actually goes out begging:

Since the highest state is Nonexistence,
the (true) dervishes *(darvīshān)* have outstripped all others;
Especially that dervish *(darvīsh)*
who has become devoid of body and worldly goods:

Poverty *(faqr)* of body is what matters, not beggary *(su'āl).*
The beggar *(sā'il)* is he whose worldly goods have melted away:
the contented man is he who has sacrificed his body.
Therefore, complain no more of affliction,
for it is a smooth-paced horse towards Nonexistence.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:1471–74, MJR6 p.340*

The poverty *(darvīshī)* of the *darvīsh* is to become empty or void of the lower ego-self. This implies realization of the higher self, the spirit that is a part of God. Hence, the true dervish knows his spiritual self to be his real self:

One day a base fellow said to a dervish *(darvīsh),*
"You are unknown to anyone here."
He replied, "The vulgar may not know me,
but I know very well who I am.
Alas, if the situation had been reversed
and he had seen me as I really am,
while I was blind to myself!"

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:4331–33; cf. MJR6 p.497*

Such a dervish, says Rūmī, is of more value than pilgrimage to Mecca, regarded as the pinnacle of Muslim religious observances. Rūmī relates a story concerning Abū Yazīd who is making a pilgrimage *(ḥajj)* to Mecca and the *Kaʿbah,* though at the same time in search of a perfect saint. On meeting such a dervish, he is told that the company of a saint is of greater value than the pilgrimage:

The sage said, "Make a circuit round me seven times,
and reckon this better than the circumambulation
(of the *Kaʿbah*) during the pilgrimage;
And lay those dirhems before me, O generous one.
Know that you have made the greater pilgrimage *(ḥajj),*
and that your desire has been achieved.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2241–42; cf. MJR2 p.337*

Other Sufis have spoken in similar terms. Anṣārī says that the true dervish seeks only God from God:

If a dervish *(darvīsh)* seeks anything
other than God Himself from God,
the door to His response is closed.

*Anṣārī, Song of the Dervish, BWIC p.216*

Sufi texts contain many stories concerning dervishes, some instructive and many miraculous. A dervish, for instance, is understood to be detached from the world:

> A dervish *(darvīsh)* once entered the presence of a king. The king addressed him, beginning, "O ascetic, …."
>
> "You are the ascetic," responded the dervish *(darvīsh).*
>
> "How can I be the ascetic?" asked the king. "The whole world belongs to me."
>
> "You are looking at things the wrong way," replied the dervish *(darvīsh).* This world and the next, along with all your kingdom, belong to me. I have taken possession of the entire universe. It is you who have become satisfied with a morsel and a rag."
>
> *Rūmī, Fīhi mā Fīhi 5:15–18, KFF p.19; cf. DRA pp.31–32, SOU p.21*

> A dervish *(darvīsh)* met a king. The king said: "Ask a boon of me."
>
> The dervish *(darvīsh)* replied: "I will not ask a boon from one of my slaves."
>
> "How is that?" said the king.
>
> The dervish *(darvīsh)* said: "I have two slaves who are your masters: covetousness and expectation."
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb II, KMM p.23; cf. KM p.20*

> Once a dervish came before Sikandar (Alexander the Great), the great king, with the bowl of a beggar and asked him if he could fill it. Sikandar looked at him and thought, "What is he asking of an emperor like me? To fill that little bowl?"
>
> The dervish asked, "Can you fill this little bowl?"
>
> The emperor immediately said, "Yes," but the bowl was a magic bowl. Hundreds and thousands and millions were poured into it but it would not fill. It always remained half empty, its mouth wide open to be filled. When Sikandar began to feel poor while filling this bowl he said, "Dervish, tell me if you are not a magician. You have brought a bowl of magic; it has swallowed my whole treasure and it is empty still."
>
> The dervish answered, "Sikandar, if the whole world's treasure was put into it, it would still remain empty. Do you know what this bowl is? It is the want of man."
>
> Be it love, be it wealth, be it attention, be it service, be it comfort, be it happiness, be it pleasure, be it rank, position, power, honour, or possession in life, the more man can receive the more he wants. He is never content, he will never be content. The richer man becomes richer with everything; with anything the poorer he becomes, for the

bowl that he has brought with him, the bowl of want, can never be filled and is never filled.

*ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK8e pp.252–53*

A dervish relies on nothing and no one but God, and wishes only to be with Him:

I have read in the anecdotes that a dervish *(darvīsh)* was drowning in the sea, when someone cried: "Brother, do you wish to be saved?"

He said: "No."

"Then do you wish to be drowned?"

"No."

"It is a wonder that you will not choose either to die or to be saved."

"What have I to do with safety," said the dervish *(darvīsh),* "that I should choose it? My choice is that God should choose for me."

*Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XXIV, KMM p.495, KM pp.379–80*

Someone entered a dervish's *(darvīsh)* room after the latter had withdrawn in seclusion. The person said: "Why are you sitting alone?"

The dervish *(darvīsh)* replied: "I only became alone the moment you entered. You have separated me from God."

*Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 3:523, MASA1 p.537, FKG p.371*

Ḥāfiẓ writes unequivocally in praise of dervishes, though it is clear from the context that he is speaking specifically of those who are spiritually advanced:

The garden of the highest paradise is the secluded retreat
of dervishes *(darvīshān),*
The treasure of plenitude and honour lies in the service
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
In that haven of seclusion are unimaginable marvels:
revelation of their mystery lies in the focused glance
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
That before which the lofty sun lays down his crown of glory
is the greatness that lies in the (spiritual) wealth
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
That palace of paradise whose door is guarded by *Riżvān*
is only an aspect of the garden of fragrance
of the dervishes *(darvīshān).*
That by whose ray base metal becomes gold
is an alchemy found in the company
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*

From pole to pole is spread an army of tyranny,
but from beginningless eternity to eternity without end
extends the repose of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
The state that is free from the pain of loss or decline –
be at ease and listen – for that is the state
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*...

O Ḥāfiẓ, if you seek the Water of Eternal Life,
its fountain is the dust at the door of the retreat
of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
O Ḥāfiẓ, show some respect – for sovereignty and country
all arise from the service at the court of dervishes *(darvīshān).*
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA pp.30–31, DIH pp.76–77; cf. DHWC (36:1–7, 13–14) p.98*

See also: **darvīshī** (▸4), **faqīr**, **faqr** (▸4).

1. For some of these details, see "dervish," Javād Nūrbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism, SSE6* p.103.
2. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XXIII, *KMM* pp.454–71; *cf. KM* pp.348–61.

**dasa sil mātā** (Sinhala) *Lit.* ten *(dasa)* precepts *(sil)* mother *(mātā);* a Sri Lankan laywoman who observes the ten Buddhist precepts of a monastic; keeping her head shaved and wearing a cloth robe, her status is between that of a layperson *(upāsikā)* and a fully ordained nun *(bhikkhuṇī);* similar to the *mae chee* of Thailand, the *don chi* of Cambodia, and the *thilashin* of Burma, and more or less equivalent to the *sāmaṇerī* (partially ordained novice nuns waiting for full ordination). Although of uncertain origin, the term is most likely derived from Sanskrit or Pali.[1]

The *dasa sil mātā* movement in Sri Lanka may be traced to 1891 when Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) advocated a restoration of the *bhikkhuṇī* order. In 1898, the first school-nunnery was established by an American Buddhist convert, Countess Canavarro. However, the formal re-establishment of the movement is commonly marked by the 1907 opening of The Lady Blake Aramaya *(aramaya,* a dwelling of one or more *dasa sil mātās)* by Sudharmachari (*b.* Catherine de Alwis) with the assistance of the wife of British Governor Blake.

As a young Christian-born Sri Lankan woman, Alwis had embraced Buddhism and had applied to her village monks for full ordination as a nun. However, since the last *bhikkhuṇī* order had faded out during the eleventh century, there was no order into which she could be admitted, and the monks were unable to help her. As a result, she moved to Burma, where she lived for some twelve years under the tutelage of the celebrated meditation master Thaton

Mingun Zetawun Sayadaw.[2] Alwis adopted the Buddhist name Sudharmachari and, on her return to Sri Lanka in 1905, formed the Sudharmadhara Samiti in the town of Kandy to promote a Sri Lankan movement of *dasa sil mātā.*

A Sri Lankan *bhikkhuṇī* order was eventually re-established in 1998 when an international higher ordination ceremony was organized at Bodhgaya in India by the Fó Guāng Shān Monastery.[3] At this ceremony, fourteen *sāmaṇera* and one hundred and thirty-five *sāmaṇerī* from various countries received full ordination as monks and nuns, including twenty *sāmaṇerī (dasa sil mātā)* from Sri Lanka.[4] One month later, in the first such ceremony on Sri Lankan soil, these twenty Sri Lankan nuns received another higher ordination[5] at the 2200-year-old Rangiri Dambulu Viharaya ('Golden Rock Dambulla Temple') near Kandy – in the ordination hall which, until then, had been used exclusively for the ecclesiastical activities of monks.

Despite continuing opposition from some quarters in the Buddhist hierarchy, the order is finding increasing acceptance, and several hundred women have now received full ordination as nuns.

Apart from their religious and spiritual life, *dasa sil mātās* involve themselves in a wide variety of social work, including caring for the sick, helping the poor, and conducting classes in Buddhism for children.

See also: **mae chee**, **thilashin**.

1. See "dasa sil mata," *Wikipedia,* ret. July 2014.
2. See Sarah LeVine & David Gellner, *Rebuilding Buddhism, RBLG* p.22.
3. See D. Amarasiri Weeraratne, "Revival of the Bhikkhuni Order in Sri Lanka," *RBOL.*
4. See Hema Goonatilake, "Women Regaining a Lost Legacy," *WRLL* pp.42–47.
5. See Wei-Yi Cheng, *Buddhist Nuns in Taiwan and Sri Lanka, WNTL* p.30.

**dàshèng** (C), **daishō** (J) *Lit.* great *(dà, dai)* saint or sage *(shèng, sho);* great teacher; a title or honorific of a high-ranking *buddha* or a *bodhisattva.*

See also: **dàshī**.

**dàshī** (C), **daishi** (J) *Lit.* great *(dà, dai)* teacher *(shī, shi);* great priest, great master; honorific titles given to *Chán* and *Zen* masters, often bestowed posthumously, and hence used especially in reference to deceased masters; in *Zen* monasteries, used in daily recitations of a monastic lineage, in which the genealogy of names goes back to the Buddha himself. The Chinese *dàshī* is also used to translate the Sanskrit *mahāsattva* (great being).

The first Japanese Buddhist monk to have received the title is said to have been Saichō (767–822), generally regarded as the founder of the *Tendai*

school, who was posthumously awarded the title Dengyō Daishi in 866. His contemporary, Kūkai (774–835), founder of the *Shingon* school, was given the title Kōbō Daishi by the Emperor Daigo in 921.

In China, the eighth-century *Chán* teacher and author Shítóu Xīqiān (700–790) was posthumously awarded the title Wújì Dàshī ('Limitless Great Master'). Shítóu Xīqiān was the third of the six patriarchs of *Chán* Buddhism, having been a student of Huìnéng (first patriarch) and a disciple of Qīngyuán Xíngsī (second patriarch). The renowned lay Buddhist, Fú Xī (497–569), better known as Fú Dàshī, also adopted the title Shànhuì Dàshī ('Good Wisdom Great Master') for himself.

Following the oriental custom of adding superlative to superlative, *dàshī* is sometimes combined with other titles such as *daioshō* (great monk), as in Kōso Jōyō Daishi Eihei Dōgen Daioshō (1200–1253), also known as Dōgen Zenji or simply Dōgen, founder of the *Sōtō Zen* school. Dōgen had trained in China with the *Cáodòng* Buddhist master Rújìng.

See also: **oshō**.

**dast-i Ḥaqq**, **dast-i Khudā** (P) *Lit.* hand *(dast)* of God *(Ḥaqq, Khudā).* See **yad Allāh**.

**dātā** (S/H/Pu), **dātār** (H/Pu) *Lit.* giver, donor, bestower, benefactor, provider; a generous person; an epithet of both God and a *guru.* Many Indian mystics have used the term. The *guru* gives spiritual wealth to his disciples, a wealth exceeding that of this world:

> There is no greater giver *(dātā)* than the master,
> no greater beggar than the devotee.
> The master freely gives to his disciples
> the wealth of all the three worlds.
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Gurudev kā Ang 38, KSS p.4, KGME p.179*

The spiritual understanding developed by a disciple under the tutelage of a *guru* brings with it a state of inner confidence. The spiritually "poor" are those who are sufficiently humble to accept a guidance that will enable their escape from this world:

> My *guru* is the perfect giver *(dātār):*
> he granted the gift of fearlessness to the poor,
> and took them across the ocean of the world.
> *Sahajobāī, Bānī, Mishrit Pad, Rāg Malār 1:1, SBB p.49*

The *guru* gives the greatest gift of all – the gift of initiation into the mystic Name or Word or God, the divine creative power:

> The *guru* is the wish-fulfilling tree;…
> The *guru* is the giver *(dātā)* of the Name *(Nām)* of the Lord
> by which the whole world is saved.
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 52 AGK*

Hence the high status that is accorded to the *satguru* (true master):

> If the merciful Lord shows His mercy,
> then the *satguru* is found.
> This soul wandered through countless incarnations,
> until the *satguru* instructed it in the Word *(Sabad).*
> There is no giver *(dātā)* as great as the *satguru:*
> hear this, all you people.
> Meeting the *satguru,* the true Lord is found:
> he removes self-conceit from within,
> and instructs us in the truth of truths.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 465, AGK*

> My *satguru,* you are the true Lord, the giver *(dātā),*
> the father and mother of all living beings.
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 7:1.2, SBP p.69*

See also: **dātār** (2.1).

**deacon** (Gk. *diakōn,* servant) One of the earliest ranks among the priesthood of early Christianity. In modern times, deacons occupy different positions in different branches of the church. In Catholicism, for example, they are ordained ministers next in rank to priests. In Protestantism, they are lay ministers appointed to help the priests, particularly in secular affairs.

See also: **priest**.

**deh(a) rūp(a)** (S/H/Pu) *Lit.* body *(deha)* form *(rūpa);* bodily form; the body; in mystic literature, the bodily form of a master. It is commonly pointed out that God cannot communicate directly with human beings. He therefore comes to the human level in an incarnate or bodily form, as a perfect master. Seeing and associating with this form brings great joy to a disciple:

Seeing the *guru,* the body *(deh)* of the great *satguru,*
I am ever in bloom.

*Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 726, MMS*

See also: **deha** (5.1), **nar nārāyaṇī deh** (5.1).

**deliverer** One who releases or rescues others from any misfortune or difficulty, such as captivity, harm, sin, and so on; in a mystical or religious context, one who brings deliverance or salvation to souls in the material world; one who can free souls from the round of birth and death; used more or less synonymously with redeemer, saviour, liberator, emancipator; commonly used for God in Judaism and Christianity, and for the saviour in Christianity and by gnostic groups such as Manichaeism, Mandaeism, and others.

In ancient Greece, it was customary at banquets to pour libations first to *Zeus* and the gods who dwelt on Mount Olympia, then to the heroes, and lastly to *Zeus* the deliverer. "I am pouring a libation to *Zeus* the deliverer" became a saying that meant "good riddance", "I am glad that ordeal is over." The Greeks started worshipping *Zeus* the deliverer after they defeated the Persians in the fifth century BCE. For the Greeks not to have been swallowed up by the Persian empire was a significant achievement.

In Christianity, in both early Christian texts as well as in later literature, Jesus is regarded as the deliverer from sin, which implies forgiveness of the burden of sin that weighs down upon the soul, as in a prayer of the newly baptized, in the *Acts of Philip:*

Glory to you, Jesus the Messiah, . . .
who have not recompensed us according to our wickedness,
nor dealt with us according to our sins.
For we did not know You, Lord,
yet You in Your mercy have sent us a deliverer.
Glory to Your grace, which has been abundant upon us,
for ever and ever.

*Acts of Philip; cf. AAA p.79*

St Augustine says that such forgiveness should be grounds for gratitude to the "deliverer":

If . . . due punishment were imposed on all, no one would have the right to criticize the justice of God in that retribution. But the fact that so many are released from it is grounds for heartfelt thanksgiving for the free bounty of our deliverer.

*St Augustine, City of God 21:12; cf. CGAP p.989*

Bernard of Clairvaux says that sin had deadened all spiritual feeling, until Jesus, the "deliverer" and forgiver of sins, brought him back to his senses:

> Sin, which is the death of the soul, took from me the feeling of remorse, hushed my prayers of praise; I was dead. Then he who forgives sin came down, restored my senses again, and said: "I am your deliverer."
>
> *Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Song of Songs 15:8; cf. WBC1 p.112*

Among gnostic writings, the *First Book of Jeu* speaks of those who are shown "the way to the peace and life of the Father through the coming of the saviour, the deliverer of souls who receive to themselves the Word of Life, which is higher than life", the saviour in this case being the "living Jesus, who has come forth from the Father".[1] Here, significantly, deliverance is made possible by the "Word of Life", the divine creative power.

Manichaean texts similarly speak of Mānī as the "Messenger of Light, . . . deliverer of souls, . . . great redeemer",[2] while a text from Chinese Turkestan in praise of Jesus, using Buddhist terminology, describes him as:

> The maker of rest and peace, the deliverer *(jiù)* from suffering,
> the bestower of mercy, the forgiver of sins,
> who creates joy and delight for my light-nature (soul),
> who offers guidance. . . .
> Now that I have decided to grasp hold
> of the curtain to the gate of enlightenment *(fǎmén),*
> the great saint *(dàshèng)* will always mercifully
> shield and protect me.
>
> *Mónǐjiào xiàbù zàn, T54 2140:1272b1–2, b5–6; cf. LSMH (80, 82) p.183*

In a Buddhist context, *dàshèng* ("great saint") is a term for a *buddha* or evolved *bodhisattva,* while *fǎmén* (*lit.* gate of the Law, gate of *Dharma*) refers to Buddhism. The gnostic deliverer also appears frequently in Mandaean literature as one who rescues souls from the misery and confusion of this world, taking them to the eternal realm, the "place of light":

> With him, with the deliverer,
> the souls of this *masiqta* (death ceremony) will ascend.
> They will behold the place of light
> and the everlasting abode.
>
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 67, CPM p.53*

Another Mandaean text tells the story of the soul who is "cast . . . into a physical body" until the time arrives for her deliverance. Then the "deliverer" comes, binds the soul to himself, and carries the soul to eternity, to the "place of light":

There the soul remained and waited in the hostel of the body. . . .
She sat and watched over it,
till its measure and count were accomplished.
When its measure and count were accomplished,
the deliverer came to her;
To her came the deliverer
who loosed her and bore her away:
He who had bound her, who had loosed the soul,
went before her whom he had bound.
Coming behind him, the soul hastened,
reached her deliverer, ran after him
who had bound her to her (spiritual) home.
Now the soul and her deliverer go:
Her course is to the place of light,
to the place whose sun never sets,
nor do its lamps of light grow dim.

*Mandaean Prayer Book 68; cf. CPM p.55*

See also: **Saviour** (2.1), **saviour** (7.1).

1. *First Book of Jeu* 39:1; *cf. BC* pp.4–5.
2. *Manichaean Hymns, HMV* p.304*ff.; cf. ML* p.11.

**deshika** (S) *Lit.* one familiar with a place *(desha);* a guide, a master; a spiritual teacher. Shankara says that seeking a master is a wise move for those in quest of spiritual enlightenment:

> Renouncing desire for the pleasures of external things, a wise man, having approached a good and generous master *(deshika)* in the right manner, should strive for liberation, aligning himself with the truth of what he teaches.
>
> *Shankara, Vivekachūḍāmaṇi 8*

**dge ba'i bshes gnyen**, **dge bshes** (T) *Lit.* virtuous *(dge ba'i)* friend *(bshes gnyen);* virtuous or spiritual friend, guide, or teacher; abbreviated as *dge bshes* (pron. *geshe*); a translation of the Sanskrit *kalyāṇa-mitra.*

*Geshe (dge bshes)* is a commonly encountered title given to holders of the Tibetan Buddhist academic degree for monks, corresponding to the Christian Doctor of Divinity; awarded primarily to monks of the *Geluk* order, especially to those of the three well-known *Geluk* monasteries near Lhasa; also awarded to monks of the *Sakya* and *Bön* traditions. The title was first

used in medieval times for revered *Kadampa* masters such as Geshe Langri Tangpa (1054–1123) and Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1102–1176), author of the popular instruction manual, *Seven Points of Mind Training*.

The *geshe* degree course was adapted from Indian Buddhist monastic universities, which closed around the time of Islam's arrival in India. Initially taught by the *Sakya* tradition, the *geshe* course flourished under *Geluk* auspices, and monks from all Buddhist traditions received training at the great *Geluk* monasteries. Often they would finish their studies at one of the tantric colleges, whose graduates were also awarded the title of *geshe*.

Taught in Tibetan, the *geshe* course is only open to monks, not to nuns or the laity. It can last between twelve to twenty-five years, and consists of lectures, memorization of texts, meditation, training in logic and dialectical debate, and other topics:

> In Northern Buddhism, texts are collections of oblong strips of paper printed by wood blocks. Traditional study was based on daily lectures on selected texts, followed by memorization. After the minimum five years, some monks would then spend at least seven years in a tantric college in which mystical tantric texts would be studied and then used as a basis for meditations. The *Geluks* have emphasized logic as a basic formative discipline, a student's doctrinal understanding being tested by public dialectical debates. Their full course of study could last up to twenty-five years, leading to the title of first or second class *dge bshes,* or doctor of buddhology. Traditional study also included medicine, astrology, astronomy, grammar, calligraphy, and religious painting.
>
> *Peter Harvey, Introduction to Buddhism, IBTH p.234*

The unabbreviated term has a particular meaning in a spiritual context. Tibetan *lama* Khenpo Chöga observes that a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* is essential for a person's spiritual evolution:

> Being ignorant about what actually causes our own states of happiness, we need to rely on a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* who educates us in the initial stages of the path, telling us what actions we should undertake and what we should avoid. Without a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),* we are like blind people lost in the desert. A blind person needs a guide to reach his destination, and likewise we need a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* to show us the path to happiness, liberation, and omniscience.
>
> *Khenpo Chöga, On Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra 105, DNK1 p.351*

Acknowledging how difficult it is to find and recognize such a teacher, Khenpo Chöga adds that if, in the presence of a teacher, the student experiences an

awakening of the desire for enlightenment and compassion for all beings *(bodhichitta),* together with a general improvement in his inner state of mind, then he can presume that the teacher is a genuine transmitter of the *Dharma* (Buddhist Way, teachings, *etc.*):

> The quintessence of all *dharma* teachings is wisdom. Whoever imparts to you the gift of wisdom, through the teachings of *sūtra* or *tantra,* has become your spiritual teacher and is thus worthy of respect. If you ignore this and treat a genuine wisdom teacher as an ordinary being, you have adopted an improper attitude, a wrong view, having failed to acknowledge the wisdom teacher for what he is.
>
> Beginning students find it very difficult to know for themselves whether or not a teacher is genuine. Therefore, the Buddhist teachings provide ample guidelines enabling students to evaluate prospective teachers. In general, a student can always check to see if the master's teachings are helpful to his state of mind. When you put the teachings into practice, notice whether your afflictions decrease, or whether your positive attitude and virtuous mind *(dge ba'i sems)* become stronger. If the latter is the case, you must acknowledge the teacher's kindness. A genuine teacher is a conduit for the genuine *Dharma.*
>
> A general positive attitude is to think, "Whoever gives rise to any positive quality in my mind is my superior." Our parents are our superiors because they have given us life, clothing, and nourishment. Titles such as master *(slob dpon),* guru *(lama),* teacher *(ston pa),* tutor *(dge rgan),* elder *(rgan),* superior *(gong ma),* and spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* all refer to those from whom we acquire knowledge and qualities. Once a teacher has imparted knowledge, or influenced us so that spiritual qualities arise, we should regard him as a superior of ours.
>
> For example, if a teacher has caused a student to arouse *bodhichitta,* then the student should immediately acknowledge this, thinking, "Based on the teacher's kindness, *bodhichitta* has arisen in my mind." Further, the student should think, "Since it obviously benefits my mind greatly, I can place my trust in the *Dharma* of the Buddha and in the teacher who has imparted the *Dharma* to me." First, acknowledge the cause or catalyst of your newly born qualities; through this you become able to place your trust in the teacher, the cause for these qualities to arise. This understanding, this recognition of the situation, is the very basis of faith and devotion. The *Dharma* is not merely information gathered from others without a bond of deep respect and gratitude toward the source of that sacred knowledge.
>
> When receiving the *Dharma,* a student should distinguish between the teacher's personality on the one hand and the teacher's capacity to impart the genuine *Dharma* on the other. These considerations must

> also be measured against the student's subjective responses to the teacher and to the teachings. The perfect teacher *(bla ma phun sum tshogs pa),* a teacher who is perfect as an individual and whose capacity to teach the genuine *Dharma* is equally perfect, is very difficult to find. To meet a *buddha*-like teacher requires incredible merit and aspirations on the part of the student.
>
> *Khenpo Chöga, On Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra 106, DNK1 pp.355–56*

Having found such a guide, it is essential to have faith in him:

> Regard your spiritual master as a learned physician. The spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* should be considered to be similar to the Buddha. It is most important to place one's trust in one's spiritual guide. If you do not trust in the physician, you will not trust in his medicine, and there will be no chance to cure your illnesses.
>
> *Khenpo Chöga, On Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra 119, DNK1 p.367*

For a spiritual guide is understood to represent the Buddha himself:

> At this present moment, infinite *buddhas* are dwelling in infinite world-systems. In our present world-system our *gurus* or spiritual guides *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* are the representatives of Buddha Shākyamuni. They turn the wheel of the *Dharma* because through their wisdom they have realized the nature of the *Dharma,* and because they are motivated by compassion for all sentient beings.
>
> *Khenpo Chöga, On Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra 50–55:5, DNK3 pp.87–88*

Even so, to find such a teacher is very difficult, and a matter of great good fortune:

> To obtain a human rebirth, to meet the *Dharma,* to find a qualified teacher, and to generate *bodhichitta* are extremely rare. It is as fortunate as a blind man finding a jewel in a heap of dust. It is a fortunate 'coincidence' that has come about through the interdependence of causes and conditions such as the kindness of one's teacher *(bla ma dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* and one's own merit of former lifetimes. Many people aspire to *bodhichitta,* but real *bodhichitta* does not arise easily.
>
> *Khenpo Chöga, On Bodhisattva-Charyāvatāra 108:28, DNK3 pp.134–35*

In his *Jewel Ornament of Liberation,* the Tibetan Buddhist monk and scholar Gampopa (1079–1153) says that an enlightened attitude "springs from the advice of a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)*" and from "constantly hearing this or that exposition of the *Dharma*".[1] Quoting liberally from Buddhist

texts, he devotes several pages to the importance of taking the help of a *guru, lama,* or "spiritual friend".

Firstly, he observes that a spiritual friend can help a seeker to overcome deep-rooted negative tendencies, and show him what they need to do in order to attain enlightenment. By "merit", he is referring to the stock of inner goodness and virtue that is gradually built up by leading a spiritual life. A *bodhisattva,* which he also calls a *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* (great-being *bodhisattva*) is one who has taken the *Mahāyāna* vow not to accept enlightenment while other sentient beings remain unenlightened:

> Even if we possess the most perfect working basis (*i.e.* human life), but are not encouraged by spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),* . . . it will be difficult to follow the path of enlightenment, because of the force of habitual tendencies due to evil deeds repeatedly committed in past lives. Therefore, it is necessary to meet spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen):* . . .
>
> > A *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* who wishes to attain unsurpassable, complete and perfect enlightenment must first meet, then associate with and venerate spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen).*[2] . . .
>
> One who wishes to realize his potential for attaining omniscience must meet with a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),* because he does not know how to accumulate merits or how to rend the veils that obscure Reality. This is made very clear by the *buddhas* of the past, present, and future.
>
> *Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:10b–11a;*
> *cf. JOLG p.30, JOLK pp.69–70*

He then gives three examples of the way in which a spiritual friend can be of help:

> A spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* is like a guide when travelling in unknown territory, like an escort when passing through a dangerous place, and like a ferryman when crossing a broad river. Regarding the first, when we travel without a guide in unknown territory, there is a danger of mistaking the path, of straying from the path, and of getting lost. But if we follow a good guide, then there will be no danger of mistaking the path, of straying from the path, and of getting lost. We will reach our intended destination without putting a step wrong. Similarly, when setting out upon the path towards unsurpassable enlightenment and heading towards the spiritual level of the *samyak-saṃbuddha* (fully enlightened *buddha*) without a spiritual friend

*(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* of the *Mahāyāna* way to guide us, then there is a danger of mistaking the path for that of the *shrāvakas* (disciples), or of straying onto the path of the *pratyeka-buddha* (one who attains enlightenment for himself alone), or of getting lost on the paths of non-Buddhists. But if we walk with a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* as our guide, then there is no danger of mistaking the path, of straying from the path, or of getting lost, and we will arrive at the city of omniscience: . . .

> The spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* is like a guide, because he sets us on the path of the perfections *(pāramitās).*[3]

The second simile concerns a dangerous place where there is a threat of thieves and robbers, wild beasts, and so on. If we go there without an escort, there is a danger of losing our body, our life, and our property. But with a suitable escort, we can reach our destination without such loss. Similarly, by setting out on the path towards enlightenment, aspiring to reach the city of omniscience by the accumulation of merit and spiritual awareness, if we have no spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* as an escort, then there is a danger of losing our favourable life circumstances and our accumulated merit to thieves and robbers – the discursive thoughts and unstable passions from within and the demons *(māras),* false guides, and so forth from without. . . . But if we have a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* as an escort, we will not suffer the loss our favourable life circumstances and our accumulated merit, and we will arrive at the city of omniscience: . . .

> All the merits of a *bodhisattva* are protected by spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen).* . . . Spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* are like an escort, because they conduct us to the city of omniscience.

Lastly, in the third simile, when crossing a broad river, if we have gone aboard a boat that has no boatman, we will either be drowned or swept away by the current, and we will not reach the other shore. But with the help of a boatman, we can cross safely to the other shore. Similarly, when we set out to cross the ocean of *saṃsāra* with no spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* to act as a boatman, even if we have boarded the ship of the holy *Dharma,* we will be either drowned in *saṃsāra* or swept away by its current: . . .

> Without a boatman,
> the boat will not take you to the other shore.

> Even if you have perfected all good qualities,
> you will not be freed from *saṃsāra* without a *lama.*[4]

> Therefore, if you keep company with a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* who is like a boatman, you will reach the dry shore of *nirvāṇa,* on the other side of the river of *saṃsāra:* . . .
>
> > A spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* is like a boatman, who can take us across the great river of *saṃsāra.*
>
> Therefore we must keep the company of a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* who is like a guide, an escort, and a boatman.
>
> *Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:11a–12a;*
> *cf. JOLG pp.31–32, JOLK pp.70–71*

Gampopa continues by describing four kinds of spiritual friend. A spiritual friend may be in human or spiritual form but, to begin with, seekers have to meet someone who is in human form, who is in the material world like themselves:

> Spiritual friends can be understood as being of four types: (1) as an ordinary human being, (2) as a *bodhisattva* who is living on a high spiritual level *(bhūmi),* (3) the *nirmāṇa-kāya* (emanation body, physical embodiment), and (4) *sambhoga-kāya* (body of delight, bliss body, subtle and non-material body) of a spiritual friend.
>
> These four types relate to an individual's spiritual realization. Since, at the beginning of our journey, it is impossible to contact the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* who are living on high spiritual levels, we have to associate with a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* who is an ordinary human being. When the darkness that arises from our *karma* has been lightened, then we can associate with *bodhisattvas* on a high spiritual level. When we have risen above the great preparatory path (T. *tshogs lam,* S. *sambhāra-mārga*), we can associate with the *nirmāṇa-kāya* of a spiritual friend. When we have attained the spiritual level of a *bodhisattva,* then we can associate with the *sambhoga-kāya* of a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen).*
>
> Who among these four is our greatest benefactor? At the beginning of our journey, when we are veiled by the darkness of our *karma* and our passions, we will not even see the face of a superior spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),* so how can we seek his company? By associating with an ordinary human being who can illuminate the path we have to follow with the light of his teachings, then we will have the opportunity to associate with superior spiritual friends. Therefore, our

> greatest benefactor is a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* in the form of an ordinary human being.
>
> *Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:12a–b; cf. JOLG pp.32–33, JOLK pp.71–72*

Of these four, *buddhas* have the highest wisdom, followed by *bodhisattvas:*

> You must know that the *buddha* embodies the perfection of the purifications.... He embodies the perfection of transcendental awareness. *Bodhisattvas* living on a high spiritual level, who are acting as spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),* possess varying degrees of wisdom and purification from the first level *(bhūmi)* up to the tenth.
>
> *Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:12b; cf. JOLG p.33, JOLK p.72*

Those *bodhisattvas* (who may not necessarily be incarnate in human form) who have reached the higher levels are said, understandably, to possess the greatest powers. "*Bodhisattvas* living on a higher spiritual level than the eighth possess ten powers by which to benefit other beings." These, says Gampopa, are power over:[5]

1. Length of life (complete control over their lifespan).
2. The mind (to enter and maintain meditative states at will).
3. The necessities (to bestow them at will on sentient beings).
4. *Karma* (to command its effects in any world, form, or manner of life).
5. Birth (to be born in this world without loss of meditative concentration and spiritual focus).
6. Creative imagination (to perform miracles, turning earth into water, *etc.*)
7. Resolution (to determine one's own interests and those of others, and to fulfil them).
8. Miracles (to perform miracles in order to engender an interest in spirituality in sentient beings).
9. Transcendental awareness (to fully understand all aspects of both phenomena as well as *Dharma*).
10. Presentation (to satisfy fully the minds of all sentient beings, according to their different dispositions, by a single discourse in their own language).

Quoting various texts, Gampopa goes on to describe the qualities of spiritual friends who are both *bodhisattvas* as well as ordinary human beings. These include:[6]

1. Possession of a *bodhisattva'*s discipline in ethics and manner.
2. To be well versed in the *Mahāyāna sūtras* and, through his profound discriminatory wisdom and awareness, be able to dispel the doubts of others.

**3**. To fully comprehend the ultimately Real.
**4**. To be full of compassion and lovingkindness.
**5**. To possess the four fearlessnesses.
**6**. To have patience.
**7**. To be indefatigable in mind.
**8**. To be adept at verbal expression.

Gampopa summarizes:

> In other words, a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* is well versed in the message of the *Mahāyāna,* and adheres to the vows of a *bodhisattva.*
>
> *Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:13b; cf. JOLG p.35, JOLK p.73*

Once again quoting a number of Buddhist texts, Gampopa concludes this section of his book by describing three ways of remaining close to the spiritual friend, once he has been found:

**1**. To attend him with respect and to serve him. To receive him with respect means to place your palms together and rise quickly in his presence, to bow down before and circumambulate him, to speak at the right time and in a loving manner, and to gaze at him ever and again without satiation:

> Gaze insatiably at spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),*
> because it is difficult to behold them, rare for them to appear
> on earth, and difficult to meet them.

To attend him through service means to provide him, regardless of any inconvenience, with proper food, garments, bedding, seating, medicines, and any of the other necessities of life: . . .

> The enlightenment of a *buddha* is attained by service to
> spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen).*

**2**. To attend him with devotion and reverence, which means to consider the spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* as the Buddha, never to disobey his teachings, and to awaken in yourself devotion, reverence, and a clear mind: . . .

> You must persistently, repeatedly and constantly
> awaken reverence for spiritual friends *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen);*
> You must be very generous with them and please them.[7]

**3**. To attend him with practice and perseverance in the teachings, which means to realize the truth of his teachings through hearing, contemplation and meditation, and by making it a living experience *(bhāvanā).* This will be greatly pleasing to him: . . .

Attending the spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)*
means to practise whatever he teaches.
By doing this, he will be greatly pleased.[8] . . .

When you please the spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen),*
you will attain the enlightenment of all *buddhas.*

*Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:13b–14b;*
*cf. JOLG pp.35–36, JOLK pp.74–75*

Gampopa then describes three stages in attending or associating with a spiritual friend: the preparatory attitude of mind, actually receiving the teachings, and the consequence of doing so:

**1**. The preparatory step is to receive the teachings with a mind bent upon enlightenment *(bodhichitta).*

**2**. Actually receiving the teachings means to ask as though you were a patient, to regard the *Dharma* as the medicine and the spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* as the physician, and to consider practise of the *Dharma* as recovering from the illness.

**3**. As a consequence, the defects of being like a pot turned upside down, a leaky pot or a pot filled with poison will be eliminated.

*Gampopa, Jewel Ornament of Liberation 3:14b; cf. JOLG p.36, JOLK p.75*

He then concludes this section with two quotations describing the benefits of association with a spiritual friend:

*A bodhisattva* who is well protected by a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* will not go down into lower forms of life. A *bodhisattva* who is well guarded by a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* will not fall under the influence of bad people. A *bodhisattva* who is well guided by a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* will not turn away from the *Mahāyāna* path. A *bodhisattva* who is well supported by a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* will rise above the spiritual level of ordinary human beings.

*Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra; cf. JOLG (3:14b) p.36, JOLK p.75*

And:

> A *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* who is well guided by a spiritual friend *(dge ba'i bshes gnyen)* will quickly attain unsurpassable, complete, and perfect enlightenment.
>
> *Ekāksharīmātā-nāma-sarva-tathāgata-prajñāpāramitā;*
> *cf. JOLG (3:14b) p.36, JOLK p.75*

Because of their exalted spiritual status, true spiritual teachers are not interested in the pomp and finery of the world, as a story told by twentieth-century nun Bhikshuṇī Thubten Chodron makes clear:

> Geshe Yeshe Tobden and Gen Lamrimpa were Tibetan monks who lived in retreat outside Dharamsala, and who taught in the West at various times. They have both passed away since then. They were incredible examples of being outwardly simple but inwardly accomplished practitioners. Gen Lamrimpa didn't like big display. He was very simple and so joyful. He meditated above Dharamsala in a simple hut for many years. I would visit him from time to time when I lived there. His hut had a dirt floor, stone and mud walls, and plastic over the cracked windows to keep the wind out. He would make us tea on an old kerosene stove. He had the reputation for having attained *shamatha,* meditative quiescence, but when asked, he never said anything about it. He never wanted lots of students following him around; he preferred to meditate in seclusion, although he greeted people warmly when they visited.
>
> Geshe Yeshe Tobden meditated in the mountains above Dharamsala for many years. Students at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, an Italian *Dharma* centre, where I lived for nearly two years, invited him to come and teach. Many *lamas* want to go to the West because they live comfortably and receive a lot of offerings, which they give to their monastery. Geshe Yeshe Tobden wasn't interested in any of that. He didn't want to go to the West. He went to Italy only because His Holiness (the *Dalai Lama*) told him to go.
>
> To show respect for Geshe-La as our teacher, we constructed a throne in the meditation hall and housed him in a comfortable villetta. When Geshe-La arrived, we served his first meal on china and gave him silverware. He looked at us and said, "Get rid of this and bring me a plastic bowl." When he went to teach in the meditation hall, he walked right by the big throne with the beautiful cushion we had arranged. He just took a regular cushion, put it on the floor, and sat down. It was an incredible lesson for us. He wasn't interested in being treated as a big *lama* with pomp and fuss. He didn't care about

our admiration; his sole interests were transforming his mind and benefiting others.

When he walked around Dharamsala, Geshe Tobden's *shamtab* – his lower robe – was uneven, and his socks were falling down. He was the kind of monk that people who didn't know him would ignore because he looked raggedy. But he was an incredible practitioner. Even his attendant, Ven. Lobsang Donden, who for years carried food up to Geshe-La's hut every week when he was in retreat, never saw Geshe-La's tantric implements – his *vajra,* bell, and drum. He never saw any sign of tantric practice, and yet clearly, Geshe-La practised *tantra.* He was just a simple and humble practitioner who consistently told us to practise thought transformation. He's a good example for us.

*Bhikshuṇī Thubten Chodron, How to Free Your Mind 8:13, FMTL pp.171–72*

See also: **friend**, **kalyāṇa-mitra**, **khenpo**, **rinpoche**.

1. Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 3:50a; *cf. JOLG* p.117.
2. *Ashṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtra.*
3. This and other otherwise unreferenced quotations from *Jewel Ornament* in this entry are from a Tibetan edition of the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (*Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 39).
4. *Jñānasiddhi* 14:4.
5. Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 3:12b–13a; *cf. JOLG* pp.33–34, *JOLK* pp.72–73.
6. Gampopa, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* 3:13a–b; *cf. JOLG* p.34, *JOLK* p.73. See also *Bodhisattva-Bhūmi; Mahāyāna-Sūtrālankāra* 12:5; *Bodhicharyāvatāra* 5:102.
7. *Ekāksharīmātā-nāma-sarva-tathāgata-prajñāpāramitā.*
8. *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālankāra* 17:12.

**dharma-bhāṇaka** (S), **dhamma-bhāṇaka** (Pa) *Lit.* a preacher *(bhāṇaka)* of the Way *(Dharma).* See **bhāṇaka**.

**dharmaguru** (S) *Lit.* leader *(guru)* of religion *(dharma);* a title used occasionally in Jainism for a *bhaṭṭāraka.* See **bhaṭṭāraka**.

**dharmānusārin**, **dharmānusārī** (S), **dhammānusārin**, **dhammānusārī** (Pa) *Lit.* follower *(anusārī)* of the Way *(Dharma, Dhamma); dharma* devotee, *dharma* follower; one of two kinds of stream-enterer *(sotāpanna)* in the fourfold

classification of noble disciples (S. *ārya-pudgala,* Pa. *ariya-puggala*); also, the sixth category in a sevenfold classification of noble disciple; one in whom an intellectual wisdom or understanding of the Way *(Dharma)* is the dominant characteristic; more commonly found in its Pali than its Sanskrit form.

The Buddhist path is viewed as being comprised of two stages – a mundane (Pa. *lokiya*) or preparatory stage and a supramundane (Pa. *lokuttara*) or more mystical stage. The mundane stage begins when a follower consciously sets out to develop virtue, concentration, and wisdom. When these qualities have been developed to a sufficient degree, and a disciple has come to see existence as it really is – impermanent, painful, insubstantial – then he is said to have entered the supramundane stage, and is known as an *ariya-puggala* (noble person). This is the path of transcendent spiritual experience, and leads ultimately to the attainment of *nibbāna* (S. *nirvāṇa*).

*Theravāda* Pali texts explain that an *ariya-puggala* passes through four successive stages – the stream-enterer *(sotāpanna),* the once-returner *(sakadāgāmī),* the non-returner *(anāgāmī),* and the enlightened one (*arahanta,* worthy one). Each stage represents the conquest or shedding, to an increasing degree, of all fetters *(saṃyojanas),* defilements *(āsavas),* and impurities *(kilesas).*

Each of these four stages is further subdivided into the path *(magga)* leading to the attainment of that stage, and its actual attainment or fruit *(phala),* making eight sub-stages in all. The first stage, that of stream-entry *(sotāpatti),* is significant, for the seeker has now entered the 'stream' – the noble eightfold path – that will convey him inevitably to *nibbāna.* It is an irresistible current that draws the traveller to the goal. Once the stage of *sotāpanna* has been entered, progress to *nibbāna* is assured through various stages, after which there is no falling back into the otherwise endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

A *dhammānusārin* is one of two categories of stream-enterer *(sotāpanna):*

**1**. The *dhamma*-follower *(dhammānusārin)* – disciples in whom the faculty of wisdom *(paññindriya)* is predominant, and who travel the noble path through the driving force of wisdom. The *dhammānusārin* is the intellectual and discriminating type who grasps the *Dhamma* by the application of reasoning and intelligence.

**2**. The faith-follower *(saddhānusārin)* – disciples in whom the faculty of faith *(saddhindriya)* is predominant, and who travel the noble path through the driving force of faith. The *saddhānusārin* is less analytical than the *dhammānusārin,* and is content to proceed on the basis of faith in the doctrines of the *Dhamma.*

The *Saṃyutta Nikāya* elaborates that the *dhammānusārī* and *saddhānusārī* have both reached the level of the *ariya-puggala* – they are practising the path of stream-entry, but have yet to realize its fruit:

> One who has faith and conviction that things are indeed this way is called a faith-follower *(saddhānusārī)* – one who has entered upon the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, and transcended the plane of the worldly people *(puthujjana-bhūmi).* He is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the domain of ghosts; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of stream-entry *(sotāpatti-phala).*
>
> One who has accepted that things are indeed this way after considering them with a sufficient degree of wisdom is called a *dhamma*-follower *(dhammānusārī)* – one who has entered upon the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of people of integrity, … *etc.* (as above).
>
> *Saṃyutta Nikāya 25:1, Cakkhu Sutta, PTSS3 p.225; cf. SNTB, CDBB p.1004*

In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* the *dhammānusārī* and *saddhānusārī* are said to be weaker in the five faculties of faith *(saddhā),* effort *(viriya),* mindfulness *(sata),* concentration *(samādhi)* and wisdom *(paññā)* than those who have attained the other four stages of the noble path.[1] In the *Sāratthappakāsinī,* a commentary on the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* attributed to Buddhaghosa, the author comments on this passage, describing the path of the *dhammānusārī* as sharp and valiant. The *dhammānusārī* has an incisive intellect, cutting off imperfections effortlessly, like one who cuts a plantain trunk with a sharp knife. The *saddhānusārī,* on the other hand, follows neither a sharp nor valiant path. He removes imperfections with effort, like one who cuts a plantain trunk with a dull blade.[2]

A number of Pali *suttas* have attempted to elaborate, combine, analyse and rationalize the fourfold classification with a sevenfold system. The result is an intellectually complex and often confusing description of various stages of the *ariya-puggala.* The *dhammānusārin* and the *saddhānusārin,* for instance, are the lowest stages as well as the basis of the sevenfold classification of the *ariya-puggala* expounded in the *Kīṭāgiri Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* – a categorization that has been further analysed and recast with some variations in the *Puggala-Paññatti* of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.*[3] This scheme amalgamates an individual's degree of attainment with the predominance of faith or wisdom in his nature. According to the *Kīṭāgiri Sutta,* the seven categories in descending order are:[4]

**1**. Liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta).*
**2**. Liberated-by-wisdom *(paññā-vimutta).*

**3**. Bodily witness *(kāya-sakkhī).*
**4**. Vision-attainer *(diṭṭhippatta).*
**5**. Liberated-by-faith *(saddhā-vimutta).*
**6**. *Dhamma* (Way)-follower *(dhammānusārī).*
**7**. Faith-follower *(saddhānusārī).*

Both the *dhamma*-devotee *(dhammānusārin)* and the faith-devotee *(saddhā-nusārin)* enter the stream as *sotāpannas.* Each of them, after crossing two further stages appropriate to their predominant characteristic – *saddhā-vimutta* and *kāya-sakkhī* in the case of *saddhānusārins,* and *diṭṭhippatta* and *paññā-vimutta* in the case of *dhammānusārins* – attain the highest fruition by becoming liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta),* a state in which the traveller sees with the insight of wisdom and experiences with the transcendental ecstasy of faith.

In the *Kīṭāgiri Sutta,* the Buddha outlines the characteristics of all seven types of individual. He has previously explained that he advises heedfulness or mindfulness *(appamāda, sata)* to some monks who are travelling the path – to those "whose minds have not yet reached their goal" – because they have need of deeper heedfulness; but he gives no such advice to others because they are already mindful, and incapable of being otherwise. He then applies this to the seven kinds of *ariya-puggala:*[5]

> *Bhikkhus* (monks), there are seven kinds of person *(puggala)* to be found in the world. Which seven? One who is liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta),* one liberated-by-wisdom *(paññā-vimutta),* a bodily witness *(kāya-sakkhī),* one who is vision-attained *(diṭṭhippatta),* one liberated-by-faith *(saddhā-vimutta),* a *dhamma*-follower *(dhammā-nusārī),* and a faith-follower *(saddhānusārī).*
>
> What kind of person is one liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta)?* This is the case in which a person experiences while in the body those peaceful liberations that transcend form, that are formless, and through the perceptions of wisdom his impurities *(āsavas)* are destroyed. This is the kind of person who is called one liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta).* I do not tell such a *bhikkhu* (monk) that he still has work to do with heedfulness *(appamāda).* Why is that? Because he has done his work with heedfulness, and he is incapable of being heedless.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 70, Kīṭāgiri Sutta, PTSM1 p.477; cf. MDBB p.580, MNTB*

The *Kīṭāgiri Sutta* goes on to describe the one liberated-by-wisdom *(paññā-vimutta)* in largely the same way as the one liberated-both-ways *(ubhato-bhāga-vimutta),* except that the former has had no experience of the transcendent and immaterial meditative absorptions *(jhānas)* while in

the body. Nevertheless, "through the perceptions of wisdom, his impurities *(āsavas)* are destroyed", and there is no need to advise him to practise heedfulness, for he is already doing so, and is "incapable of being heedless". This category indicates that inner purity and heedfulness are not necessarily accompanied by mystical experience.

The "bodily witness *(kāya-sakkhī)*" is one who has enjoyed transcendental experiences ('his body is witness'), yet not all his imperfections have been destroyed by the "perceptions of wisdom". He is advised to pay greater attention to heedfulness. The "vision-attainer" *(diṭṭhippatta)* does not enjoy mystical experiences, nor has he destroyed all his imperfections. So naturally, he too is given similar advice.

Neither the one-liberated-by-faith *(saddhā-vimutta),* nor the *dhamma*-follower *(dhammānusārī),* nor the faith-follower *(saddhānusārī)* have enjoyed transcendental experiences. However, by means of the "perceptions of wisdom", one liberated-by-faith has destroyed some of his imperfections, "and his faith is planted, rooted, and established in the *tathāgata*".

The last two categories are still beginners and remain afflicted by imperfections. Understandably, both "still have work to do with heedfulness".[6] Of the *dhammānusārī,* the *Kīṭāgiri Sutta* says:

> Those teachings proclaimed by the Tathāgata are accepted by him after reflecting on them sufficiently with wisdom. Furthermore, he has these qualities: the faculty *(indriya)* of faith *(saddhā),* . . . of effort *(viriya),* . . . of mindfulness *(sata),* . . . of concentration *(samādhi),* and . . . of wisdom *(paññā).*
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 70, Kīṭāgiri Sutta, PTSM1 p.479; cf. MDBB p.582, MNTB*

Of the *saddhānusārī,* in place of the observation regarding wisdom, it is simply said that "he has sufficient faith in and love for the Tathāgata". The Buddha then summarizes the foregoing by observing that enlightenment is attained only by gradual degrees:

> *Bhikkhus,* I do not say that gnosis *(aññā)* is attained all at once. On the contrary, gnosis *(aññā)* is attained by gradual training, by gradual practice, by gradual progress.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 70, Kīṭāgiri Sutta, PTSM1 p.479; cf. MDBB p.582, MNTB*

Other *suttas* have additions and variations on the same theme. According to the *Dīgha Nikāya,* the one liberated-both-ways has attained complete mastery of the eight liberations *(aṭṭha-vimokkhas)* – also called the eight states of meditative absorption *(jhāna).* Through both faith and discriminatory intelligence, he has acquired supernatural wisdom *(abhiññā);* has destroyed all

impurities *(āsavas);* and enjoys liberation through both mind *(ceto-vimutti)* and wisdom or insight *(paññā-vimutti)*[7].

In the *Anguttara Nikāya,* the stages of the *dharmānusārī* and *saddhānusārī* are further subdivided into the path *(magga)* itself and its fruit *(phala).* This is how the sevenfold classification has arisen. Thus, when the faith-follower *(saddhānusārī)* attains its fruit, he is known as liberated-by-faith *(saddhā-vimutta),* and the *dhamma*-follower as vision-attainer *(diṭṭhippatta)* and liberated-by-wisdom *(paññā-vimutta).* In this description, two of the seven categories are hence related to the predominance of faith in a person's nature and three to the predominance of wisdom. The remaining two – the *kāya-sakkhī* and the *ubhato-bhāga-vimutta* – are characterized by a focus on concentration *(samādhi),* with an emphasis on attaining the four higher *jhānas* (states of meditative absorption).[8]

Among the commentarial texts, the *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭakathā,* the *Majjhima Nikāya Ṭīkā,* and the *Puggala-Paññatti* expand further on the characteristics of each of these seven categories, again with some variation between them.[9] To the layperson, and perhaps to many Buddhists, these categorizations must appear somewhat arbitrary, especially since all human beings are different from each other, and do not readily fit into such minutely defined categories. This uncertainty is evident from the variations in meaning given by the three main Pali commentaries on the text.

Among these varying commentarial definitions, the *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭakathā* says that the *ubhato-bhāga-vimutta* is 'liberated-both-ways' because he is liberated from the physical body through concentration and meditation on the formless and immaterial, and from the mind through following the noble path.[10]

However these texts may be interpreted, even if it is understood that the *dhammānusārī* and the *saddhānusārī* have yet to attain the fruit of the stage of stream-entry, they are nevertheless assured of ultimate enlightenment:

> Those *bhikkhus* who are *dhamma*-followers *(dhammānusārin)* or faith-followers *(saddhānusārin)* are all headed for enlightenment.
>
> *Majjhima Nikāya 22, Alagaddūpama Sutta, PTSM1 p.142, MDBB p.236*

See also: **srotāpanna**.

1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 48:12–18, *PTSS5* pp.200–2, *CDBB* pp.1674–75.
2. *Sāratthappakāsinī,* on *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 48:12–18, in *CDBB* p.1931 (n.198).
3. *Puggala-Paññatti* 1:30–36, *PTSP* pp.14–15; Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga* 12:75, *PTSV* pp.659–60.
4. See also *Dīgha Nikāya* 28, *Sampasādaniya Sutta, PTSD3* p.105, *TBLD* p.420.

5. *Majjhima Nikāya* 70, *Kīṭāgiri Sutta, PTSM1* pp.477–79; *cf. MDBB* pp.580–82, *MNTB.*
6. *Majjhima Nikāya* 70, *Kīṭāgiri Sutta, PTSM1* pp.477–79; *cf. MDBB* pp.581–82, *MNTB.*
7. *Dīgha Nikāya* 15, *Mahānidāna Sutta, PTSD2* pp.70–71; *cf. TBLD* pp.229–30.
8. *Anguttara Nikāya* 9:43–45, *PTSA4* pp.451–53.
9. *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭakathā, Majjhima Nikāya Ṭīkā,* and *Puggala-Paññatti,* on *Majjhima Nikāya* 70, *Kīṭāgiri Sutta,* in *MDBB* pp.16–17, 1274–75 (n.702–7).
10. *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭakathā,* on *Majjhima Nikāya* 70, *Kīṭāgiri Sutta,* in *MDBB* p.1274 (n.702).

**dhobī** (H/Pu), **dhobiā**, **dhubiā** (H) *Lit.* washerman; metaphorically, a master, the spiritual washerman whose intention is to make the soul clean by washing away human imperfections and the accumulated *karma* of countless past lives. A number of Indian mystics have used the same metaphor:

> The *guru* is the washerman *(dhobī),*
> the disciple the cloth, the Word (*Sirjanhār,* Creator) the soap.
> When washed on the rock of meditation *(surat silā),*
> infinite light emerges from it.
>
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Gurudev kā Ang 26, KSS p.3*

> If the master, the washerman *(dhobiā),* washes your mind,
> never again will it be soiled. . . .
> With remembrance as the soap, and love as the water,
> your mind, cleansed of all blemishes, will shine with virtue.
> So deftly will the washerman *(dhobiā)* scrub it clean
> that not even a speck of dirt will it ever gather again.
>
> *Mīrābāī, Satsang Updesh ke Pad 8, MSS p.750; cf. MDLS p.42*

Since no one else can perform such a service, it is worth spending time in the quest for a *guru:*

> There is no other washerman *(dhubiā)* like the *guru:*
> he washes the sheet of the bridelike soul.
> Removing the dirt, he makes it clean and pure:
> how can I praise the greatness of the *guru?*
>
> *Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 37:21.1–2, SBP p.328*

Sahajo says, find a *guru* who will be like a washerman *(dhobī):*
he will give you the soap of knowledge *(gyān),*
and wash you thoroughly by scrubbing.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who can erase all your doubts:
he will be like the rain cloud
that makes no distinction between high and low.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who shines like the sun:
he will illuminate all life, prince and pauper equally.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who is impartial, free from greed.

*Sahajobāī, Bānī, Guru Mahimā 57–60, SBB p.10; cf. SPBS p.49*

Having found such a *guru,* there is no time to be wasted in practising the path he teaches:

Act now, O Paltū, such that your mind *(man)* does not become impure;
For where will you go to get your laundry washed
if the washerman *(dhubiā)* should die?

*Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 7, PSB1 p.7*

See also: **kumhār**, **siklīgar**.

**dīdah rawshanān**, **dīdah-var** (P) *Lit.* clear *(rawshanān)*-sighted *(dīdah);* sight *(dīdah)*-possessing *(var);* clear-sighted ones; visionaries, mystics; those who enjoy inner vision and inner experiences. Rūmī, characteristically, uses the term for the perfect saint, describing him as the "*quṭb* of the age, the possessor of inner vision *(dīdah-var),* at whose stability even the mountains are astonished."[1] He says that such mystics see God everywhere:

The peerless God has made the six directions a theatre
to display His signs to clear-sighted ones *(dīdah rawshanān),*
so that, whatever animal or plant they look upon,
they may gaze upon the pastures of divine beauty.[2]
Hence, He said to the company:
"Wheresoever you turn, His face is there."[3]
If in thirst you drink some water from a cup,
you see God within the water.
He that is not a lover (of God)
sees his own image in the water, O man of insight *(ṣāḥib-baṣar);*
But since the lover's image has disappeared in Him,
whom now should he behold in the water? Tell me!

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:3640–45; cf. MJR6 pp.458–59*

See also: **dīdah** (▸3).

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* I:2129; *cf. MJR2* p.116.
2. *Cf. Qur'ān* 2:118, 164, 3:190, 16:10–16, *passim.*
3. *Qur'ān* 2:115.

**Digambar(a)** (S/H) *Lit.* space, sky, direction, cardinal point *(dish)* + clothing *(ambara);* having space or sky for clothing; having the points of the compass for clothing; clothed by space, sky-clad; one who takes the sky or the surrounding space for his garment; a name given to members of one of the two main schools of Jainism and to some other classes of Indian ascetic who remain completely naked; a naked mendicant. *Dish* (space, direction) becomes *dig-* before words beginning with vowels and soft consonants.

The intended purpose of nudity is to free the mind and soul from attachment to the body and personal possessions. For many centuries, however, it has been only *Digambara* monks who have remained naked, not the nuns or the laity. The division between monks and the lay community seems to have taken place gradually between the second to fifth centuries CE.

It is probably during the same period that Jainism finally divided into its two main schools: the *Digambaras* and the *Shvetāmbaras* ('white-clothed') – *Digambaras* being the more rigorous and puritanical in outlook. Many authorities suggest that this split began some time after the leadership of Āchārya Bhadrabahu (*c.*433–355 BCE) and following a severe twelve-year famine (*c.*300 BCE) that saw the deaths of many in the ancient kingdom of Magadha (now roughly Bihar and Bengal). Magadha was the geographical centre of Jainism where Mahāvīra (*c.*599–527 BCE, the twenty-fourth and last *Tīrthankara* of the present era) had taught. It is also likely that the division was exacerbated by the geographical separation of different Jain communities, the separate groups slowly evolving their own traditions. The separation of the two schools has continued to the present day.

According to the results of a 2001 census, the number of Jains living in India was 5·2 million, spread throughout almost all Indian states. Around seventy-five percent were living in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Tamil Nadu. *Digambaras* are more numerous in southern India, and *Shvetāmbaras* in western India.

Only a small proportion of Jains are monks and nuns *(munis).*[1] In recent times, however, there has been an increasing trend towards renunciation, with nuns outnumbering the monks. A census conducted in late 2006 recorded 13,813 *munis* of which *Shvetāmbara* monks numbered 2,510, with 10,228 nuns; *Digambara* monks numbered 548, with 527 nuns. This was an overall increase of nearly fifty percent on figures obtained in 1986, the rate of increase being around twice as fast in the latter half of the period as the first.[2]

In ancient times, mendicant Jain *munis* or *sādhus* from both *Shvetāmbara* and *Digambara* traditions were expected to be itinerants except, like Buddhist monks, during the three or four months of the rainy season. This was because travel at that time would cause undue harm to the many invertebrates and other minute creatures that can be inadvertently trodden under foot during this season. But with the passage of time, Jain monks adopted an increasingly sedentary lifestyle in the monasteries associated with the temple complexes. Also, by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, most *Digambara* monks wore clothes in public, due to pressure from the Muslim rulers. As a consequence, the tradition of naked mendicant *sādhus* gradually declined.

Both Jain schools are generally agreed on all the fundamental principles of their religion. Differences centre around three main issues: which texts are authoritative; questions concerning men and women; and the mendicant vow of non-possession *(aparigraha)* – *Digambaras* believe that a monk who owns any property including the possession and wearing of clothes cannot attain liberation. Various other minor doctrinal differences also exist between the two schools, particularly in the systematizing and categorizing of Jain philosophy.

*Digambaras* maintain that all *Tīrthankaras* (Jain saviours) are male, born to *kshatriya* (warrior caste) women, and practise nudity after their renunciation; that the embryo of Mahāvīra was not transferred from the womb of Devanandā (a *brāhmaṇ* woman) to that of Trishalā (a *kshatriya* woman), as the *Shvetāmbaras* contend; and that a woman cannot reach the state of liberation without being born as a man. Furthermore, although *Digambara* women can take the vows of renunciation, these vows are less stringent than those taken by monks, and include no requirement for nudity. In conformity with their belief in the nudity of the *Tīrthankaras, Digambara* idols and images of the *Tīrthankaras* are naked and unadorned, with eyes downcast in contemplation. *Shvetāmbara* idols, on the other hand, have a loincloth, are adorned with jewels, and have glass eyes. *Digambaras* hold that Mahāvīra never married; *Shvetāmbaras,* on the other hand, believe that he married and had a daughter.

*Shvetāmbaras* believe that only the first and the last *Tīrthankaras* of the present era practised nudity; that Mallinātha, the nineteenth, was a woman; and that women can attain liberation without being reborn as men. *Shvetāmbara* women are not denied full membership of monastic orders.

*Digambaras* assert that the body of a *Tīrthankara* is like pure crystal, lacking the normal basic bodily constituents, such as blood and so on. He is subject to neither diseases nor to feelings such as hunger. He has no need to eat, but is instead nourished directly by a form of subtle matter. He is utterly withdrawn from the world, and teaches by means of a sacred sound *(divya-dhuni)* emanating from his body.

*Shvetāmbaras* contend that after attainment of *kevala-jñāna* (omniscience), a *Tīrthankara*'s skin and blood become pure white, his hair ceases to grow,

and his eating and evacuation are invisible. Nonetheless, while a *kevalin* still experiences bodily feelings such as hunger, and still requires the nourishment obtained by eating, no sensual pleasure is associated with his eating.[3]

The two traditions each have their own sacred literature. Although the *Digambara* and *Shvetāmbara* schools both list fourteen *pūrvas* ('ancient') and twelve *angas* ('division') among the original sacred literature of the Jains, *Digambaras* believe that these were lost after the death of Mahāvīra. Consequently, they deny the authenticity of these texts as they appear in the *Shvetāmbara* canon. Both schools are agreed that the teachings of Mahāvīra were transmitted orally until the time of the twelve-year famine.

According to *Shvetāmbara* tradition, after the famine had passed, a group of mendicant monks gathered together at Pāṭaliputra (modern Patnā) to recite whatever could be remembered of the scriptural canon. However, it is not known whether the scriptures were subsequently preserved in writing or by oral transmission. Many centuries later, during the fourth and fifth centuries CE, three other recitations were held for the same purpose. *Digambara* monks, however, were absent from the last of these recitations, at which time the sacred texts were recorded on palm leaves, and *Digambaras* have always denied the authenticity of this final redaction of the Jain scriptures.

*Digambaras* do believe that parts of the twelfth *anga,* which contains teachings from the *pūrvas* concerning *karma,* were remembered by some of their own *āchāryas.* Thus, the *Digambara* text, *Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama* ('Scripture in Six Parts'), was written down by two disciples of Āchārya Dharasena (*c.*137 CE). Most *Digambara* scriptures are hence comprised of works written by various monks of the distant past.

Only the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* ('That-Which-Is Scripture'), written by Āchārya Umāswāmī (known as Umāsvāti to the *Shvetāmbaras*) in perhaps the first or second century CE, and which contains an outline of Jain teachings, is regarded as authoritative by both *Digambara* and *Shvetāmbara* traditions. Both schools claim Umāswāmī as one of their own, but it is likely that he lived before the deeper division arose between the two schools. The *Digambaras* believe that the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and its earliest commentary were written by the different authors, while *Shvetāmbaras* maintain that the *sūtra* and its first commentary were both written by Umāswāmī.

The *Digambaras* fall into two main sects, the *Bīsapanthīs* and the *Terāpanthīs* (though there are also several smaller groups). The main difference between them is that *Bīsapanthīs* accept the authority of a *bhaṭṭāraka* (venerable or learned one), while *Terāpanthīs* do not. Evolving in medieval times, *bhaṭṭārakas* became the spiritual and administrative heads of *Digambara* Jain orders and monasteries *(maṭhas).*

A modern *bhaṭṭāraka* is no longer the head of a mendicant order, his duties being confined to his own local monastery, and he no longer accepts disciples. Thirty-six separate seats of authority existed in medieval times, of which

only ten have survived – in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. Prior to the twentieth century, they also flourished in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi.

The smaller *Digambara* groups include the *Tāraṇ Swāmī Panth* of central India, founded by Tāraṇ Swāmī in 1505, and the *Gumān Panth* of Jaipur, commonly regarded as a branch of the *Terāpanthīs.* Two new groups arose in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the *Kavi Panth,* who originated as followers of Shrīmad Rājachandra (1867–1901), and the *Kānjī Swāmī Panth,* who were followers of Kānjī Swāmī (1890–1980).

Finding its leadership among learned lay Jains or *paṇḍits,* the *Terāpanthī* movement began in the late seventeenth century as a response among the laity to the increasingly worldly and corrupt behaviour of the *bhaṭṭārakas. Terāpantha* has a double meaning – either the 'thirteenth *(terah)* path *(panth)*' or 'your *(terā)* path'. The 'thirteen' relates to the original thirteen Rajasthani laymen of Amer (now part of Jaipur) in North India who started the breakaway movement and built the first *Terāpanthī* temple, and to the thirteen aspects of *Digambara* ritual that they rejected. 'Your *panth*' relates to a proclamation that this *panth* is 'yours', others being in error.

Discarding some of the temple rituals that they regarded as non-Jain in origin, the *Terāpanthīs* retain worship of *Tīrthankara* images, but reject the worship of unliberated deities such as *yakshas.* Bearing in mind the principle of *ahiṃsā* (non-injury), substances with the potential to contain life, such as fruit, flowers, sandalwood paste and dairy products, are also rejected in favour of dry materials, such as whole grains of rice, almonds, cloves, dates and coconuts, which are less likely to contain living organisms. The lamp ceremony *(āratī)* was also abandoned out of concern for fire-bodied beings *(tejo-kāyika). Terāpanthīs* also worship while standing, rather than seated.

During the eighteenth century, a corresponding *Shvetāmbara Terāpanthī* school that rejected the worship of images, came into being in response to the lax conduct of both monks and laity. In present times, the *Shvetāmbaras* are largely divided into two main schools – the *Mūrtipūjakas* (image worshippers) and the *Sthānakavāsīs,* who do not worship idols and other images, but instead practise mental meditation and worship *(bhāva-pūjā)* of the *Tīrthankaras.*

The *Terāpanthī* movement owes much to the earlier *Adhyātma* movement that flourished in Agra, Delhi, Vārāṇasī, and other North Indian cities during the mid-seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries. This movement began as discussion groups organized by Jain laymen to study the texts of Kundakunda and others of the *Digambara* mystical tradition. Overlooking differences of caste and sect, these meetings were attended by both *Digambara* and *Shvetāmbara* laypeople.

In times past, considerable animosity existed between the two schools. But with the steady development of greater accord, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the twentieth century saw a revival of the tradition of

naked *munis,* who aligned themselves to neither faction, and the adoption by North-Indian *Bīsapanthīs* of many of the *Terāpanthī* rituals. Nevertheless, the division between the *Digambaras* and *Shvetāmbaras* persists and, even in modern times, the members of one school will not normally visit the temples of the other. The *Terāpanthī* tradition has become the dominant division in large areas of central India, although the majority of *Digambaras* in Jaipur are *Bīsapanthīs.* Nowadays, *Terāpanthīs* are present in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and northern Maharashtra.[4]

See also: **bhaṭṭāraka**, **sādhu**, **Shvetāmbara**.

1. For some of the details in this entry, see K.L. Wiley, *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW* pp.xxv–xxvi, 1–2, 7–9, 12–20.
2. Babulal Jain-Ujwal, *Times of India, IJCS.*
3. See "Tīrthaṅkara," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*
4. See "Terāpaṅthī," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**director** See **spiritual director**.

**diṭṭhippatta** (Pa) *Lit.* vision *(diṭṭhi)* attained *(patta);* one of a sevenfold classification of noble disciples (S. *ārya-pudgala,* Pa. *ariya-puggala*). See **dharmānusārin**.

**divine man**, **godlike man** (Gk. *theios anēr*) An expression commonly used for powerful kings and heroes in ancient Greece, and used by Plato for mystical philosophers.

It is an ancient notion that the inner essence of a human being can attain union with the Divine. Orphic tablets dating from the earliest days of Greek civilization speak of man becoming God. One such tablet reads: "Hail, you who have suffered the suffering.... From man, you have become God," while another says: "O happy and blessed one, you will be God instead of mortal."[1]

In harmony with the Orphic tradition, the mystic Pythagoras (*b.c.*580 BCE) later became the representative icon of the divine man. Thus, Aristotle spoke of three classes of being: "gods, normal human beings, and those such as Pythagoras".[2] Even in early Christian times, those who followed the mystical path of the ancient Greek mystics were still commonly known as Pythagoreans. The first-century (CE) Apollonius of Tyana, for instance, was said to be a Pythagorean, and was described as "the most divine among men".[3]

According to Plato, the role of philosophy is to help human beings become like God.[4] In the *Symposium,*[5] Alcibiadēs describes Socratēs as the

traditional divine man *(theios anēr).* In the *Republic,* Plato suggests that the ideal guardians of his ideal state should be philosophers and divine *(theioi).*[6] In the *Sophist,* he expresses his belief that although human beings cannot become gods, they can become godlike or divine.[7] Even so, he associates divine men with gods when he speaks of something "discerned by some god or perhaps by some godlike man";[8] and observing that a person may be born with a divine nature, he speaks of "when a man's soul is so far divine that it is made pregnant with these virtues (temperance and justice) even in his youth".[9]

The second-century Christian teacher Origen is warmly described by his friend and pupil, Gregory Thaumaturgus (the 'Wonderworker'), a mid-third-century Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, in his *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen.*[10] Gregory speaks of his friend's charm of manner, his generous friendship, his wide sympathy, and his consummate wisdom.[11] He is a man, he wrote, who "has already completed most of the preparation for re-ascent to the divine world", and whose "inner being connaturally touches God, though it is for the moment enclosed in what is visible and mortal".[12] It was through Origen, he said, that he had come to appreciate the Greek philosophers and their great relevance to the teachings of Jesus.

See also: **God-realization** (▸3).

1. *Orphic Tablet,* in *GMAR* p.207.
2. Aristotle, *Fragment* 192, *AFLF* p.156.
3. Flavius Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 2:5.1 *PELS* p.191.
4. Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b.
5. Plato, *Symposium* 215a *ff.*
6. *Republic* 375e *ff.,* 385c.
7. Plato, *Sophist* 216b, 265b–266e.
8. Plato, *Philebus* 18b.
9. Plato, *Symposium* 209b.
10. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyric on Origen, WTDA* pp.36*ff.*
11. G.W. Butterworth, *Origen on First Principles, OFP* p.iii.
12. Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen* 2:10, 13, *SGT* pp.13, 93.

**dūst** (P) (pl. *dūstān*) *Lit.* friend, confidant, beloved; sweetheart, lover, mistress; in Sufism, God; the spiritual master, the *pīr, shaykh,* or *murshid;* a particularly intimate term for friend, associated with the quality of divine love *(maḥabbah),* which precedes the seeker's love for God, pulling him towards divine union. The "friend" implies both the outer form of the master, as well as his inner spiritual form of light, the divine beloved, often portrayed in Sufism as a manifestation of the divine Beauty.

Speaking of this inner form, ʿIrāqī maintains that even heaven without the beloved would be "a barren waste":

Heaven full of milk, honey and wine
is but a barren waste for us
without the beauty of the friend *(dūst).*
*ʿIrāqī, Kullīyāt 1599, KHI p.151, in SSE2 p.42*

Ḥāfiẓ has much to say on the subject, and it is clear that he makes little distinction between the Divine, and the inner and outer forms of the master. He is intoxicated with divine love, and leaves all such calculation to others. The only moments worth counting are those spent with the friend:

The delightful moments were those
which were spent with the friend *(dūst);*
The rest were all unrewarding and uninspired.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.48, DIH p.120, in SSE2 p.42*

The friend is always free. He can choose whom he pleases, but the lover remains his captive:

If, instead of me, the friend *(dūst)* chooses someone else,
he is the commander.
But a curse be my life to me if I choose it over the friend *(dūst).*
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.169, DIH p.293; cf. DHWC (372:5) p.643*

There is nothing better than to hear the message of the friend. This "message" can be his outer teaching or the inner Call of God, the divine Word:

Hearing of the friend's *(dūst)* message
is felicity and safety;
May my dear life be a ransom
for the dust of the friend's *(dūst)* door.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.232, DIH p.372; cf. DHWC (499:2) p.820*

The master is both one with God and His messenger. Ḥāfiẓ waxes lyrical at the thought of him:

Welcome! O messenger of those who yearn,
bring me word of the friend *(dūst),*
that, joyfully, I may sacrifice my soul *(jān)* for the friend *(dūst).*...

O Ḥāfiẓ! Be continually consumed by longing for him –
be content without a remedy.
For there is no remedy for the restless pain
of yearning for the friend *(dūst).*

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA pp.41–42, DIH p.98; cf. DHWC (30:1, 8) p.86*

A messenger arrived from the country of the friend *(dūst),*
bringing the Talisman of Life in the writing of the friend *(dūst).*
Joyfully, did it describe
the grandeur and grace of the friend *(dūst);*
Joyfully, did it recount
the glory and greatness of the friend *(dūst).*
For bringing these glad tidings, I gave him my heart,
though I am ashamed of the poor value of this coin
that I placed before the friend *(dūst).*
Thanks be to God that, by my great good fortune,
I am entirely engrossed by desire for the friend *(dūst).*

What power of ours can cause the revolution of the moon
and the orbiting of the heavenly spheres?
Their progression is by the power of the friend *(dūst).*
If the wind of disaster should destroy the two worlds,
we will remain gazing up the road in expectation of the friend *(dūst).*

O morning breeze! Bring me bejewelled collyrium
from that lucky dust that was the thoroughfare of the friend *(dūst).*
My head lies in supplication at the threshold of the friend *(dūst):*
let us see who is granted sweet sleep in the bosom of the friend *(dūst).*
Why should I fear if an enemy has designs upon the life of Ḥāfiẓ?
Thanks be to God that I am not ashamed of the friend *(dūst).*

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.9, DIH p.47; cf. DHWC (29:1–9) p.85*

"Bejewelled collyrium" is collyrium mixed with ground pearls, regarded as a medicine for the eyes. Ḥāfiẓ is saying that the grace of the friend will be a medicine that opens his inner eye. "Sweet sleep" is a metaphor for the peace of spiritual consciousness. The "threshold" is the entrance to the inner "door" by which the soul leaves the body in mystic transcendence.

In another poem, Ḥāfiẓ asks the "breeze" to bring him a message. Here, again, the "breeze" and "fragrant air" are allusions to the Breath of God, the divine Word or creative power:

O breeze, if your steps should happen to pass by
the land of the friend *(dūst),*

bring a waft of fragrant air
from the perfumed tresses of the friend *(dūst).*
By my soul, I will surrender my life in thankfulness,
if you bring me a message from the friend *(dūst).*
And if you can gain no access to that presence,
bring a little dust from the threshold of the friend *(dūst),*
as collyrium for my eye.

A beggar such as I – where can I go?
Where can I take my longing and yearning
for union with him?
Perhaps in sleep I may behold
the vision and beauty of the friend *(dūst).*
The pine cone of my heart is shaking like a willow,
in wonder at the form and pinelike stature of the friend *(dūst).*

Although the friend *(dūst)* would not buy us even for a pittance,
I would not, even for the whole world,
sell a single hair of the head of the friend *(dūst).*
What if my heart were to be freed from the bond of yearning,
when poor Ḥāfiẓ is the slave and servant of the friend *(dūst)?*

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.37, DIH p.90; cf. DHWC (31:1–7) pp.87–88*

Ḥāfiẓ says that he has nowhere else to go, but to the friend. Indeed, referring to both the inner and outer aspects of the master, he says that life with the friend carries a unique kind of joy:

Life without the friend *(dūst)* has no joy like this.

*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DIH p.135; cf. DHWC (170:5) p.327*

See also: **beloved**, **yār**.

**eagle** Any of a number of large birds of prey having long, broad wings, a strong soaring flight, and keen eyes, normally building a nest (an eyrie) on a high, inaccessible rock ledge; in mystical imagery, the soul; also, less frequently, the saviour or master. According to an ancient tradition, the eagle can also look straight into the sun[1] and, rather than going blind, actually increases its power of vision by doing so. In the same way, it is said that the soul sees God. Eagles also make a frequent appearance in the visions, dreams and parables of the biblical prophets and later revelational texts, though the symbolic meaning is not always clear.

Just as the soul was sometimes depicted as a bird, the saviour was also portrayed as the king of birds, the bird who – according to popular

imagination – flies higher than all. The perception of a saviour is likewise keen – he has the perception of God, and sees everything. Since the terms for air and spirit are the same in a number of ancient languages (*e.g.* Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), the flight of a bird in the air naturally suggests the flight of the soul into the realms of spirit.

As a term for the saviour, the eagle appears in both Manichaean and Mandaean texts. In the Manichaean psalm book in Coptic, the devotee prays to the saviour to be carried up to the spiritual realms ("skies"):

> Take me up upon your wings:
> O eagle, fly with me to the skies.
> Set my white robe upon me:
> take me in as a gift to your Father.
> *Psalms of Heracleidēs, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.188*

Another psalm similarly speaks of the saviours as:

> The assembly of the eagles,
> they that draw my heart (soul) to the skies.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.155*

Another describes the ascent of the soul to the "eyries of freedom" in the company of the "eagles":

> The snarers who would ensnare you (the soul),
> you have put to shame,
> you have rolled up their nets.
> They marvel at the beauty of the strength of your wings
> as you ascend with your eagles to the eyries of freedom.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLVIII; cf. MPB p.70*

Another speaks of the appearance of the spiritual form of the master who draws the soul back to God:

> He will appear to you . . . with a face full of joy;
> He will wash you also,
> and purify you with his pleasant dews.
> He will set your foot on the path of Truth,
> and furnish you with your wings of light,
> like an eagle hovering,
> ascending through his Air (Spirit).
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXXIX; cf. MPB p.100*

Perhaps the most elaborate appearance of the eagle as a symbol of the gnostic saviour is to be found in the Mandaean *John-Book*.[2] Here, the saviour is an eagle and the souls are birds who settle in the Tree of Life, the divine creative power. In this poetic parable, the Tree of Life is portrayed as a huge Vine – analogous to the True Vine of John's gospel.[3] A flock of birds settles in the Tree, but they are struck by a great storm that dislodges many, hastening them to an unhappy end. Those that are able to hold fast, however, are found by an eagle and, in a switch of imagery, the souls become vine shoots on the great Vine and are given water – Living Water – by the eagle. This makes them grow to twice their normal size. Picking up the story with the arrival of the eagle:

> The storms and tempests passed,
> and calm spread over all the world.
> As the birds sit there and chirrup,
> and would be abuilding their nests –
> as the birds sit on the Vine –
> an eagle wheeled and flew there.
> A white eagle came,
> looked down and caught sight of the birds.
> Round he wheeled,
> sped down to them with his wings,
> and came and alighted on the Tree.
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.133; cf. GJB p.65, JM p.131*

The "eagle" joins the birds on the Tree of Life. He is the natural king of the birds, since he is greater in stature and can fly higher and further than all the others. "White" symbolizes his spiritual purity. The birds in the Tree have no hesitation in taking this "white eagle" as their leader and source of wisdom:

> The birds engaged him in conversation, saying,
> "By your life, O eagle,
> in this Tree were birds without number.
> But storms broke loose against them,
> and raging tempests fell upon the Tree.
> They shook them off from the Tree,
> so that their wings were nearly torn from them.
> Many held fast,
> whom the storms and tempests could not tear away;
> But many flew off at top speed.
>
> "We speak to you, therefore, O eagle,
> we ask you about those birds,

because you are sharp of sight,
and can see all that happens in this world:
What have the storms and tempests
done with those birds, our brothers?
What have you espied concerning them?"
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.133–34; cf. GJB pp.65–66, JM p.131*

They ask the omniscient, all-seeing "eagle" the meaning of the tempest and the fate of the other birds.

He answered them:
"It would be better for you not to know, my brothers,
what has become of those birds.
Sling shots drove them far from me, their wings broke:
Torn off they were, broken off;
They went hence, and fell prey to the bird catchers.
Harrier and hawk wheeled round about them,
tore pieces from their flesh,
and fed on those who were fat.
Unfortunate were those who fell prey
to the water (of the river of death),
if there was no help for them at the crossing."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.134; cf. GJB p.66, JM pp.131–32*

The birds that lost their grip on the Tree of Life were attacked by every kind of misfortune. They were hunted by men armed with stones and slings; they were driven far from the eagle who could have been their helper. They were badly injured, losing the use of their spiritual "wings". They placed their faith in the "bird catchers" – the fowlers who enticed them into their snares with the lure of good food and the hope of a safe haven. Thus were they deceived, forfeiting their lives. The "harrier and hawk" hovered over them, preying on them until all their spiritual life was gone. They fell victim to the water of the river of spiritual death and, when their time came to die, they had nothing of any value to help them cross.

The misfortunes that befell the birds are metaphors for the illusions of this world that deceive most of its residents. They represent its enticements and entanglements, its religions and philosophies, whose real worth cannot be fully tested until after death, by which time it is too late to make an alternative choice. They are the human passions and worldly attractions of every kind that rob a soul of its wings to fly in the subtle realms of the Spirit. The soul sinks to the material level and suffers every kind of indignity. Spiritually, the soul 'dies' – its influence is muffled – long before physical death comes. And when it does, the soul has no spiritual wealth and no one to help her cross

the "water" of the river of death. It is not a comforting picture, but it is one commonly painted by mystics. Hence, the eagle continues:

"Well for you, O birds,
who hold fast to this Vine;
You became a companionship of Miryai,
the Vine who stands at the mouth of the Euphrates.

"See and satisfy yourselves, O birds,
that I have come to you.
I have come to my brothers,
to be a support for them in this world."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.134–35; cf. GJB p.66, JM p.132*

Those souls who cling to the Tree of Life, to the Vine, become a spiritual family to whom the eagle, the saviour, comes as helper and master. The imagery then switches to that of the souls as "vines" on the great Vine of Life. The eagle continues:

"I have come to heal Miryai,
come to bring water to the good, beloved plants,
to the vines, who stand at the mouth of the Euphrates.

"In a pure white pail I draw water,
and bring it to my plants.
I bear and I hold it on arms of splendour,
which are my own.
I bear and I hold it and give them to drink.
Well it is for him who has drunk of my water.
He drinks, finds healing, is made whole,
and grows to twice his stature."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.135; cf. GJB p.66, JM pp.132–33, in MEM p.153*

The symbolism is different, and this section of the story is probably an insertion from another Mandaean poem. Possibly two eagle stories or poems have been combined by the writer or compiler of this text. But its meaning being parallel, it fits well enough. Miryai is now the soul in need of healing. The "Euphrates" is the Living Water at whose "mouth" grow the "vines", the souls. The saviour draws "water" in a "pure white pail", which denotes its spiritual purity, holding it on "arms of splendour". (This is hardly an eagle!). The vines are watered with this Living Water, and are spiritually healed of all past sins. Spiritually, they double their size – Living Water is a powerful growing agent!

Then the vines who drank the water
  brought forth good fruit.
Their leaves turned upwards,
  and they strove valiantly.

But the branches that drank no water
  brought forth sour fruit.
Unfortunate are those
  who have not gone forward on the Way;
Unfortunate are those
  who have lingered by the waystone!
They hated the Treasury of Life,
  Miryai, the dear Truth.

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.135; cf. GJB p.66, JM pp.132–33*

The imagery of the vines continues. The souls who drink the Living Water grow, while those who drink none of it become full of the bitterness of materiality. The poet is explicit: "Unfortunate are those who have not gone forward on the Way." They linger "by the waystone", forgetful of the real purpose of life's journey, with no regard for the divine "Treasury of Life" within themselves, now portrayed as Miryai in her role as a personification of the divine Power, the "dear Truth". The discourse of the eagle is then resumed:

"My brothers, hold fast,
  be a companionship of Miryai.
I will look round in the world;
I will let the Call of Life sound forth;
I will arouse the sleeping and awaken them."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.135–36; cf. GJB p.66, JM p.133*

He will seek out the sleeping souls in the world, and spiritually awaken them, raising them from spiritual death. This is the role of the saviour. The eagle then gives his final exhortation – be steadfast, be a self-supporting family, enduring whatever has to be gone through in order to reach the spiritual goal:

The eagle flew off from the Tree;
  he wheeled round and instructed his friends.
He spoke to them:
"Give ear to me, my brothers!
Stay fast and endure persecution.
Be a companionship of Miryai."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.136; cf. GJB pp.66–67, JM p.133*

The eagle also appears as the saviour in the *Robe of Glory,* an allegorical and gnostic poem inserted into the *Acts of Thomas.* At the point in the story where the eagle makes its appearance, the soul has fallen fast asleep in the material universe. A remarkable "letter" is therefore sent to him by his divine "parents", which has the "likeness of an eagle". The "letter" turns out to be a speaking letter that is "all-speech" or all-Voice. It symbolizes the divine Voice or Word of God that calls souls back to their eternal home:

> It flew in the likeness of an eagle,
> the king of all the birds;
> It flew and alighted beside me,
> and became all-speech.
> *Robe of Glory 51–52, Acts of Thomas IX, in PSW p.191*

See also: **eagle** (▸1).

1. *E.g.* Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (C1st CE), *Pharsalia* 6:799–800; Isidore of Seville (C7th CE), *Etymologies* 12:7.10–11; St Antony of Padua (C12th–13th), *Sermons;* Guillaume le Clerc (C13th), *Bestiare;* Bartholomaeus Anglicus (C13th), *De Proprietatibus Rerum* 12; see bestiary.ca/beasts/beast232.htm, ret. October 2014.
2. For the full story, see "The Radiant Birds on the Tree of Life," in *PSW* pp.144–52.
3. *John* 15:1–8.

**eka-bījī** (Pa) *Lit.* having one *(eka)* seed *(bīja);* germinating only once more; one who will germinate only one more time; one who is destined to be reborn only once more; the second of the four stages on the way to *nibbāna* (Pa. enlightenment); also called *sakadāgāmī* (once-returner).

See also: **arhat**, **sakṛidāgāmin**.

**elder** (He. *zaken,* Gk. *presbyteros*) A senior and influential member of a community; also used in ancient Asia Minor for secular magistrates.

In Jewish tradition, the term appears throughout the Hebrew Bible and associated apocryphal literature in expressions such as the "elders of Israel", "elders of the Jews", "elders of the people", "elders of the town", and so on – Moses, for instance, appoints seventy elders as intermediaries between himself and the Israelites.[1] Jewish "elders" are also mentioned throughout the three synoptic gospels of the New Testament (usually in a derogatory or hostile context),[2] though not in *John,* as companions of the chief priests and scribes.

Elders of the Christian church are mentioned in some of the New Testament letters and also in *Acts.* Significantly, none of Paul's letter speaks of them. They only appear in the later letters *(1 Peter, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, James),* indicating that these were written when Christian organization had reached a more advanced stage than existed when the synoptic gospels and the letters of Paul were written. The writer of *2* and *3 John* also refers to himself as "the Elder",[3] though the implication in this context is uncertain.

The use of the term is somewhat confused by the fact that the Greek *presbyteros,* at first used for 'elder', came to mean 'presbyter' (*i.e.* priest). In the early church, elders are mentioned along with bishops as local leaders of Christian communities. During the second and subsequent centuries, the threefold division of bishop, priest or presbyter, and deacon was adopted, with the result that, in the Roman Catholic Church, the office of elder fell into disuse, although it survived longer in the Orthodox tradition. In present times, the title lives on in the Methodist, the Mormon, and the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, having been revived when these churches were established. The office is variously applied to both ordained ministers as well as members of the laity.

See also: **priest**, **scribes**, **staretz**.

1. *Numbers* 11:16.
2. *E.g. Matthew* 15:2, 16:21, 21:23, 26:47, 57, 59, 27:1, 3, 12, 20, 41, 28:12; *Mark, Luke, passim.*
3. *1 John* 1:1; *2 John* 1:1.

**elect one** (He. *baḥir*) A prophet, a mystic, a saviour, the messiah (He. *mashi´aḥ*); also translated as the 'chosen one'.

The term is used in the apocalyptic and eschatological *1 Enoch*[1] for the messiah, where he is also called the Son of Man (He. *ben adam, ben enosh*) and the righteous one *(ẓaddik).* He is portrayed as sitting on his throne of glory, passing judgment on those who come before him on the Last Day. The "righteous ones" will be given good cause for jubilation, but sinners will be destroyed. *1 Enoch* is a composite of several texts, most likely by different authors, written during the fifth to first centuries BCE and extant mostly in Ethiopic. Some of these texts speak of the messiah as the righteous one; others call him the elect one. Of additional interest is the portrayal of the changed condition of both earth and heaven on the Last Day:

> On that day, My elect one shall sit on the throne of glory and try the deeds of the righteous; and their places of rest shall be without number. And their souls shall grow strong within them when they

> see My elect one and those who have called upon my glorious Name. Then will I cause My elect one to dwell among them; and I will transform heaven, and make it an eternal blessing of light. And I will transform the earth, and make it a blessing, and cause My elect one to dwell upon it.
>
> But sinners and evildoers will not set foot upon it; for I have looked in peace upon my righteous ones, and given them mercy, and have caused them to dwell before me. But sinners have come before me so that, by judgment, I shall destroy them from before the face of the earth.
>
> *1 Enoch 45:3–6; cf. BE p.63, OTP1 p.34*

Because the messiah or elect one stands before God, the "Lord of Spirits", he is also the eternal essence of Wisdom, the divine creative power, from whom all knowledge, righteousness, power and wisdom flow:

> For wisdom is poured out like water,
> and glory is measureless before him forevermore.
> For he is mighty in all the secrets of righteousness,
> and unrighteousness shall vanish like a shadow,
> having no foundation –
> Because the elect one stands before the Lord of Spirits,
> and his glory is for ever and ever,
> and his power throughout all generations.
> And in him dwells the spirit of Wisdom,
> and the spirit which gives insight,
> and the spirit of knowledge and strength,
> and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness.
> And he shall judge the secret things,
> and none shall be able to utter a lying word before him;
> For he is the elect one before the Lord of Spirits
> according to His good pleasure.
>
> *1 Enoch 49:1–4; cf. BE pp.67–68, OTP1 p.36*

See also: **chosen one**, **chosen ones** (▸4), **elect** (▸4), **righteous one**, **righteous ones** (▸4), **ẓaddik**.

1. *1 Enoch* 39–40, 45, 49, 51–53, 55, 61–62.

**emancipator** One who brings freedom from any form of restraint; one who liberates a slave; in a mystical or religious context, one who frees others from captivity, difficulty, sin, and so on; one who brings freedom or emancipation from the bondage and oppression of the physical universe; one who can free

souls from the round of birth and death; used occasionally for a saviour or master.

See also: **deliverer**, **saviour**.

**enlightener** One who enlightens, one who brings spiritual enlightenment, one who brings spiritual light; illuminator; a master or saviour.

More commonly translated from the various languages as 'illuminator', the epithet is used for Jesus in the *Acts of Thomas,*[1] and for the Holy Ghost in the *Acts of John.*[2] In gnostic texts, the illuminator appears either as Jesus,[3] as James the brother of Jesus,[4] or as an unidentified saviour.[5] In Manichaean literature, the epithet is used for both Jesus and Mānī. The title is used for Mānī throughout the Coptic *Kephalaia.*

See also: **illuminator**.

1. *Acts of Thomas* VIII, *AAA* p.286.
2. *Acts of John* 14, 21, *ANT* pp.257, 264.
3. *Letter of Peter to Philip* 133–39, *NHS31* pp.236–47.
4. *Second Apocalypse of James* 55, *NHS11* pp.130–31.
5. *Apocalypse of Adam, passim.*

**envoy** (Gk. *apostolos, presbeutēs,* Parthian *fryshtg*), **envoy of Light**, **envoy of the Father**, **envoy of Truth** In general, an envoy is an appointed messenger, representative, or ambassador. In Christian texts, an envoy is usually an alternative translation of the Greek *apostolos* (apostle), meaning one who is sent, and referring to the apostles of Jesus. In Manichaean literature, an envoy is a saviour, a master, an apostle or messenger of God. Manichaean texts also speak of the Third Envoy or Third Messenger, who comes to this world (the 'third creation') to rescue souls from the powers of darkness. Mānī himself is also known as the envoy of the Father, envoy of Truth, envoy of Light *(míngshǐ* in Chinese texts, which translates the Parthian *Fryshtgrwshn),* and so on. According to a Parthian hymn:

> The envoy of the Father heals spirits,
> gives joy to all, and removes sorrows.
> *Manichaean Hymns, Huyadagmān I:2, MHCP pp.66–67*

The envoy is also equated with the divine *Nous* (Mind, Intelligence) and the *Vahman* or Great *Nous* (Great Mind), both terms for the divine creative power or Intelligence that has made and constantly sustains creation:

When I had repeated these words, with soul atremble,
I beheld the saviour as he shone before me.
I beheld the sight of all the helmsmen,
who had descended with him to array my soul.
I lifted up my eyes toward that direction,
and saw all deaths were hidden by the Envoy. . . .

In joy unbounded, he spoke with me,
raising up my soul from deep affliction.
He said to me: "Come, spirit! fear not.
I am your Mind *(i.e. Nous),* your glad tidings of hope. . . .
I am your light, radiant, primeval,
your Great Mind *(i.e. Vahman)* and complete hope."
*Manichaean Hymns, Angād Rōshnān VI:1–3, 7–8, 10; cf. MHCP pp.138–41*

In the Manichaean psalms in Coptic, the envoy (Gk. *presbeutēs*) is again the saviour sent to rescue the soul:

They took an envoy *(presbeutēs),* they sent him after me:
He grasped the palm of my hand,
he carried me up to the land of peace.
*Psalms of Thomas V, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.211*

The divine envoy of Truth
will give you the diadem of light.
*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXVII; cf. MPB p.22*

One of the Coptic *Psalms of Thomas* relates a parable regarding the shipwreck and rescue of the soul. When word comes to the "Mighty One" of the plight of the soul:

He called an envoy *(presbeutēs),* a storehouse of life,
which is the *Nous;*
He called an envoy *(presbeutēs),*
and sent him forth unto the ship, saying
"Go to the place whither the wind has taken the ship;
tow the ship, and bring it up hither."
*Psalms of Thomas III, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.208*

In a similar parable, a youth (*i.e.* man) is lost in a deep pit at the bottom of *Hadēs.* He is weeping, and under attack from demons and all the forces of darkness, but again:

> When the Mighty One heard, when they gave him word,
> he called an envoy *(presbeutēs)* –
> the Adamas of Light, the pitiless subduer of rebels.
> *Psalms of Thomas IV, Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.209*

And the envoy, the saviour, the First Man, the "Adamas of Light" is sent to conquer and fetter the demons and other forces, and to rescue the soul.

These Manichaean *Psalms of Thomas* are translations of Mandaean texts into Coptic. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that the Mandaean texts themselves often speak of the envoy *(ashganda)* or messenger of Life who is sent by "Life", a Mandaean term for God, to rescue the souls imprisoned in this world.[1]

See also: **apostle**, **ashganda**, **messenger**.

1. *Mandaean Prayer Book* 362, *CPM* p.255.

**eremite** (Gk. *ēremitēs,* L. *eremita*) A hermit. See **hermit**.

**Essenes** (Gk. *Essēnoi, Essaioi, Ossēnoi, Ossaioi;* sg. *Essēnos, Essaios, Ossēnos, Ossaios*) A Jewish sect, school or brotherhood that existed during the latter half of the Second Temple period (516 BCE – 70 CE), but of whom very little is actually known.

Even the name itself is of uncertain origin and etymology, and was variously spelled by writers of antiquity. The anglicization of the word comes from the Greek *Essēnoi,* although *Essaioi* appears in earlier texts and may be closer to the original Hebrew or Aramaic. But over fifty theories have been put forward concerning the origin of the name, and there is no established consensus. It may be related, for example, to the Greek *hosiotēs* (holiness), as suggested by the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus (*c.*20 BCE – 50 CE).[1] On the other hand, some Jewish scholars have maintained that it comes from the Hebrew *ḥasidim* (the pious ones) or from the Syriac *hasin* (pious). Another proposal is the Hebrew *ḥasha´im* (silent ones). It has also been suggested that the name could be related to the Aramaic *ḥassyya* (pious) or *ʾassayya* (healers).

Apart from some references in the rabbinic (Jewish) literature and some passing comments by the Christian fathers and the Neo-Platonist Porphyry, only three of the writers of antiquity ever speak of them. Philo Judaeus and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (*c.*37–100 CE) both say that there were about 4,000 Essenes living in the cities and villages of Judaea. The Roman historian, Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE) mentions them in passing,

describing them as having a settlement or settlements near the Dead Sea, living "away from the western shore, far enough to avoid harmful things, a people alone, . . . companions of palm trees",[2] although it is unclear whether the "harmful things" refer to the noxious breezes blowing off the Dead Sea or the disturbances of normal human life! Presuming that there is substance to these accounts, it seems that some Essenes lived in separate communities, while others were more integrated with normal society, according to their bent of mind or to the spread of opinion within the group.

Porphyry (*c.*232–305), having quoted[3] Josephus' report in *The Jewish War,* goes on to say that they were also to some extent vegetarian:

> All of them, however, were forbidden to eat the flesh of swine, or fish without scales, which the Greeks call cartilaginous; or to eat any animal that has solid hoofs. They were likewise forbidden not only to refrain from eating, but also from killing, animals that fled to their homes seeking refuge.
>
> *Porphyry, On Abstinence from Animal Food 4:14; cf. SWPF p.152*

The early Christian Jerome also refers to Josephus as having said that the Essenes abstained from "wives, wine, and flesh".[4]

According to the two main sources of information, Josephus and Philo, the Essenes adhered assiduously to the rules of the *Torah,* especially to the laws of purity and observance of the Sabbath. They worked together in the fields and at other manual tasks, sharing the fruits of their labour within their community. They also emphasized ritual purity at mealtimes and at such rites as communal baptism. In order to join the sect, there was a probationary period when acolytes took certain vows of an ethical and moral nature. These included the vow to "preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels."[5]

Josephus provides considerable detail concerning their beliefs, practices, and lifestyle. In *Antiquities,* he summarizes:

> The doctrine of the Essenes *(Essēnoi)* is this: that all things are best left in the hands of God. They teach the immortality of the soul, and believe especially that they should strive earnestly for the rewards of righteousness. When sending to the Temple whatever they have dedicated to God, they offer no (animal) sacrifices because they have purer lustrations of their own. For this reason, they are excluded from the precincts of the temple, and perform their own rites. Yet their way of life is of the highest order, devoting themselves entirely to agricultural labour.
>
> They also deserve our admiration, in contrast to all others who claim their share of virtue, because such righteousness as theirs

> has never been found among any other people, neither Greek nor barbarian, no, not even briefly, and thus has it long endured among them. Moreover, they hold all their possessions in common, so that a wealthy man enjoys no more of his own property than he who possesses nothing at all.
>
> There are about four thousand men that live this way. They neither marry wives, nor do they own slaves, since they believe that the latter tempts men to injustice, and the former opens the way to a source of disharmony. Instead, they live by themselves, and look after each other. They elect, by show of hands, good men and priests to receive their revenues and the produce of the earth, and to prepare bread and other food.
>
> *Josephus, Antiquities 18:1.5; cf. J9 pp.14–19, JCW p.377*

In *The Jewish War,* Josephus provides a more detailed account. Firstly, he identifies the Essenes as one of the three main Jewish schools. The first identifiable custom is that they do not marry:

> There are three philosophical schools among the Jews. The followers of the first are called Pharisees, the second Sadducees, and the third, who cultivate a distinctive holiness, are known as the Essenes *(Essēnoi).* Jewish by birth, they show a greater affection for one another than do the other schools. They shun pleasure-seeking as a vice, and consider temperance and mastery of the passions to be virtue. Wedlock they disdain, but they adopt other men's children, while they are still pliable and docile, and regard them as their kin, moulding them in accordance with their own principles – not that they wish to do away with marriage, and thereby the means of continuing the race, but they are afraid of the promiscuity of women, and are convinced that none of the sex remains faithful to one man.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.2; cf. J2 pp.368–69, JCW p.476, JWW p.125*

They support each other and share whatever they have; they dress simply and reject the custom of anointing themselves with oil:

> Contemptuous of wealth, their communalism is truly admirable, and you will not find one among them to be better off than the rest: for it is a rule among them that new members must surrender what they have to the whole order – so that neither humiliating poverty nor excessive wealth is ever seen among them, but each man's possessions go into the common pool and, like brothers, their entire property belongs to all.
>
> Oil they regard as a defilement, and if one of them is accidentally anointed, he scrubs himself clean; for they make a point of keeping

> the skin dry and of always being dressed in white. Men to take care the community's affairs are elected by a show of hands, the particular services of each being chosen by the whole community.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.3; cf. J2 pp.368–71, JCW p.476, JWW p.125*

They are spread throughout the country in many communities, and take care of each other when travelling. They possess only one pair of shoes, and their possessions are regarded as a common trust:

> They dwell in no single city, but have large colonies everywhere. When members arrive from elsewhere, all the resources of the local community are put at their disposal, as if they were their own; and they are entertained by men they have never previously met as if they were old friends. For this reason, they carry nothing whatever with them when they travel, except for weapons to ward off bandits. In every town, one of the order is especially appointed to look after strangers and to provide them with clothing and other necessaries.
>
> In dress and personal appearance, they are like children under stern discipline. Neither garments nor shoes are changed till they are torn to shreds or worn threadbare with age.
>
> Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another, but everyone gives what he has to anybody in need, and receives from him again in return something he himself can use; but even without giving anything in return, they are free to share the possessions of anyone they choose.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.4; cf. J2 pp.370–71, JCW p.476, JWW pp.125–26*

Their daily lives consist of prayer, labouring, washing and communal meals; they converse in a measured manner without interrupting one another. Josephus' observation regarding the status of the sun in their morning worship of the Deity is obscure, and has resulted in lengthy scholarly discussion, without the emergence of any clear solution:[6]

> And as for their devotion to the Deity, it takes a most peculiar form. Before sunrise they speak not a word concerning mundane matters, but offer to it (the sun) certain prayers handed down from their forefathers, as if entreating it to appear. After this, they are despatched by their supervisors to the various crafts in which they are severally skilled, at which they labour with great diligence until the fifth hour (an hour before noon). They then assemble together again in one place, and when they have donned linen loincloths, they bathe their bodies in cold water. Following this purification, they assemble in a building belonging to the community, to which no uninitiated person is permitted entry. Thus purified, they proceed to the refectory as if

> to some sacred shrine. Sitting down in silence, the baker serves them loaves in order and the cook sets before each one a plate of a single kind of food. Before eating, a priest says grace, and it is forbidden for anyone to taste the food before grace is said. After breakfast, he offers a second prayer; for at the beginning and the end, they give thanks to God as the bountiful giver of life. Then, removing their sacred (white) garments, they go back to their work until the evening, after which they return once more to take supper following the same procedure; and any guests that may have arrived, also sit down with them.
>
> Nor is there ever any clamour or disturbance to desecrate their house, for they speak in turn, each making way for his neighbour. To people outside, the silence within seems like some dread mystery; but it is the natural result of their invariable sobriety and the restriction of their food and drink to a simple sufficiency.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.5; cf. J2 pp.370–75, JCW pp.476–77, JWW p.126*

They are honest people, restraining their passions, caring for each other, and living according to the injunctions of their creed and the counsels of the biblical patriarchs and prophets:

> In all other matters, they do nothing without orders from their supervisors; only two things are left entirely up to them – rendering assistance to those in want, and charity. They may of their own accord help the deserving, when they stand in need of it, and give food to the destitute; but they cannot give anything to their relatives without official approval. Showing indignation only when justified, they are the masters of their temper, champions of fidelity, and ministers of peace. Whatever they may say is more binding that an oath; but the swearing of an oath they avoid, deeming it worse than perjury, for they say that he who cannot be believed without appeal to God already stands condemned.
>
> They display an extraordinary interest in studying the writings of the ancients, singling out in particular what is for the greatest advantage of their soul and body; and with the help of these, with a view to the treatment of disease, they make investigations into medicinal roots and the properties of stones.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.6; cf. J2 pp.374–75, JCW p.477, JWW pp.126–27*

Full acceptance into their community is preceded by a probationary period of three years, during which time the prospective candidate is gradually inducted into their way of life. He is required to commit himself to a strict moral, ethical, and religious code. Moreover, he vows not to divulge their doctrines to outsiders:

> Anyone wishing to join their sect is not immediately admitted, but – receiving from them a small hatchet, the loincloth previously mentioned, a girdle, and white garments – he must follow the same rule of life as the members for a year, during which time he remains outside the fraternity. Having proved his temperance during this period, he is brought into closer association with the rule and is allowed to partake of the waters of purification, but is not yet admitted into the communal life. Following this demonstration of fortitude, his character is tested for two years, and if he is found worthy, he is accepted into their community.
>
> But before he is allowed to touch the communal food, he is obliged to swear tremendous vows: first, that he will practise devotion to God; next that he will deal justly with his fellow man – that he will wrong no one either of his own volition or at another's bidding; that he will always hate the wicked and help the good; and that he will keep faith at all times and with all men, especially with those in authority, since (as they believe) no one in authority attains office save by the will of God; and that if he himself is given power, he will never abuse his authority, and neither by dress nor by other outward marks of authority outshine those beneath him; that he will be forever a lover of truth, and seek to expose those that tell lies; that he will keep his hands from stealing, his soul innocent of unholy gain, and will neither conceal anything from members of his own sect, nor reveal any of their doctrines to others, no, not even if tortured to the point of death. He further vows to communicate their doctrines exactly as he himself has received them; to abstain from robbery; and in like manner to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels. Such are the vows by which they bind their converts.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.7; cf. J2 pp.374–77, JCW p.477, JWW p.127*

Those guilty of a serious breach of conduct are expelled from their community, usually temporarily:

> Those convicted of major offences are expelled from their community, and the outcast often comes to a miserable end; for being bound by oaths and customs, he is not at liberty to partake of other men's food, and so is forced to eat grass until he wastes away and dies of starvation. For this reason, out of compassion, they receive many of them back again when they are at their last gasp, deeming that the miseries they have endured, which have brought them to the brink of death, are sufficient punishment for their misdeeds.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.9; cf. J2 pp.376–79, JCW p.477, JWW pp.127–28*

In matters of justice, they abide by the counsel of their elders and the wishes of the majority. They also follow the normal rules of hygiene, and are strict observers of the Sabbath:

> In their trial of cases, they are just and scrupulously careful, never passing sentence in a court of fewer than a hundred men; but when they have reached a decision, there is no appeal. What they honour most after God is the name of their Lawgiver (unnamed, but possibly Moses), and blasphemy against him is a capital offence. They also consider it right to obey their elders, and a majority. Accordingly, if ten sit down together, one will not speak if the other nine desire silence.
>
> They are also careful to avoid spitting into the midst of the company, or to the right. Moreover, they are stricter than any other Jews in resting from their labours on the seventh day; for not only do they prepare their food the day before to avoid kindling a fire on that day, but they will not so much as move a vessel from its place, nor even go and ease themselves. On other days, they dig a trench a foot deep with a mattock – for such is the nature of the hatchet given to novitiates – and wrapping their cloak about them so as not to affront the divine rays of light, they squat over it. Then they put the excavated soil back into the trench. For this purpose, they choose the more secluded spots, and though discharge of excrement is natural, they make it a rule to wash themselves after it, as if it had defiled them.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.9; cf. J2 pp.378–81, JCW p.477, JWW p.128*

Despite their practice of communalism, they maintain a social and religious hierarchy. Their simple and austere lifestyle leads to longevity; and they disdain the comforts of life. They handle with equanimity even the trials and torments that may be meted out to them by others:

> According to their stage of preparation, they are divided into four grades, of which the juniors are so far inferior to the seniors that if the seniors should be touched by the juniors, they must wash themselves, as if they had associated with a foreigner. They are long-lived also, many of them living more than a hundred years, by reason, I suppose, of the simplicity and regularity of their daily life. They make light of danger and the miseries of life, and conquer pain by sheer willpower.
>
> As for death, if it comes with honour, they esteem it better than life without end. Their spirit was tested to the utmost by the war with the Romans, who tortured and twisted, burnt and tore them to pieces, subjecting them to every instrument of torture yet invented in order to make them blaspheme the Lawgiver or eat some forbidden food. Yet they could not make them do either, or ever once cringe before their

> tormentors, or even shed a tear. Smiling in their agony and chiding their tormentors, they joyfully resigned their souls, certain that they would receive them back again.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.10; cf. J2 pp.380–81, JCW pp.477–78, JWW p.128*

Like the Greeks, they believe in the immortality of the soul, regarding the body as its prison:

> For it is their unshakable conviction that bodies are corruptible and that the matter they are made of is impermanent, but that their souls are immortal and imperishable. Emanating from the subtlest aether (spirit), these souls become entangled, as it were, in the prison house of the body, to which they are drawn by some natural enticement. But when once they are released from the bonds of the flesh, then, as though liberated from a long captivity, they rejoice and are borne aloft. Sharing the same belief as the sons of Greece, they maintain that for virtuous souls there awaits a dwelling beyond the ocean, a place troubled by neither storms of rain, nor snow, nor by intense heat, but refreshed by the gentle breathing of the west wind, blowing in perpetually from the ocean. But wicked souls they relegate to a dark and tempestuous abyss, full of never-ending punishments.
>
> It seems to me that the Greeks entertain the same notion when they allot the islands of the blessed to their brave men, whom they call heroes and demigods; and to the souls of the wicked, the region of the ungodly down in *Hadēs,* where their fables relate that certain persons – such as Sisyphus, and Tantalus, and Ixion, and Tityus – undergo punishment. Their intention was firstly to establish the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and secondly to encourage virtue and discourage vice; for the good become better in their lifetime by the hope of a reward after death, and the passions of the bad are restrained by the fear that, even if they escape detection while alive, they will undergo never-ending punishment after their decease. These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes *(Essēnoi)* concerning the soul, whereby they irresistibly attract all who have once tasted their wisdom.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.11; cf. J2 pp.380–83, JCW p.478, JWW pp.128–29*

In *Antiquities,* Josephus also distinguishes the three main Jewish sects of the time according to their beliefs concerning free will and destiny. The Essenes, he says, believe that everything happens according to destiny:

> At this time there were three schools of thought among the Jews, who held different opinions concerning human actions; the first was that of the Pharisees, the second the Sadducees, and the third the Essenes

> *(Essēnoi).* As for the Pharisees, they say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate; and that some of them are in our own power, and that although fate has some part it in, they are not caused by fate. But the sect of the Essenes maintains that fate governs all things, and that nothing befalls men but according to her decree. But the Sadducees do away with fate, holding that there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs do not come about in accordance with her decree; they suppose that all our actions lie within our own power, so that we ourselves are responsible for our well-being and suffer misfortune from our own folly.
>
> *Josephus, Antiquities 13:5.9; cf. J7 pp.310–13, JCW p.274*

He also adds that some of the Essenes have the gift of clairvoyance and are able to foretell the future:

> There are also those among them who claim to foretell the future, after a lifelong study of sacred literature, and by various kinds of purification, and the aphorisms of the prophets; and seldom, if ever, do they err in their predictions.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.12; cf. J2 pp.384–85, JCW p.478, JWW p.129*

Josephus has several stories to tell concerning this ability. In *Antiquities,* he speaks of a certain "Simon, a man of the sect of the Essenes *(Essaioi),*" who correctly interprets a dream experienced by Herod Archelaus, son of Herod the Great and ethnarch of Judaea, regarding the imminent end of his reign, which happened only five days after Simon had predicted it.[7] Josephus also mentions a man named Judas "who was of the sect of the Essenes *(Essēnoi),* and who never missed the truth in his predictions".[8] He also relates a somewhat lengthy story about an Essene *(Essēnos),* "whose name was Menaḥem, whose virtue was attested by the excellent way in which he lived his life, and especially by a foreknowledge of future events given him by God". According to Josephus, when Herod the Great (*c.*73 BCE – 4 BCE) was still a child, Menaḥem greeted him as "King of the Jews". At that time, since Herod had "no hopes of such advancement", the king-to-be dismissed it as a jest:

> This man had once observed Herod, then still a boy, when going to see his teacher, and had greeted him as "King of the Jews". Herod, thinking that the man either did not know him or that he was in jest, reminded him that he was only a private citizen. Manaḥem, however, smiled gently and clapped him on the backside, saying, "Nevertheless, you will be king and you will begin your rule happily, for you have been found worthy of this by God. But remember the blows given by Manaḥem, so that they may be a sign for you of the change in your

> fortune. For truly the best attitude for you to take would be to love justice, and devotion to God, and clemency towards your citizens. But I know that you will not be such a person, since I understand the whole situation; for you will excel all men in good fortune, and you will enjoy an everlasting reputation, but you will forget devotion and righteousness. This, however, cannot be concealed from God, and at the end of your life you will find that He is mindful of these things and will punish you for them."
>
> At the time, Herod paid very little attention to what Manaḥem had said, for he had no hopes of such advancement; but afterwards, when he had been fortunate enough to be advanced to kingship, and when he was at the height of his power, he sent for Manaḥem and asked him how long he would reign. But Manaḥem said nothing at all. In the face of his silence, Herod asked further whether or not he had ten more years to reign. The other replied that he had twenty or even thirty more years, but he set no limit to the appointed time. Herod, however, was satisfied even with this answer and dismissed Manaḥem with a friendly gesture. And from that time on, he continued to honour all the Essenes.
>
> Now we have thought it proper to report these things to our readers, however incredible they may seem, and to reveal what took place among us because many of these men, by reason of their excellent virtue, have been thought worthy of a knowledge of divine things.
>
> *Josephus, Antiquities 15:10.4–5; cf. J8 pp.180–83, JCW pp.333–34*

It is because of such associations and experiences, says Josephus, that Herod – who developed into a tyrannical, paranoid and greatly feared ruler, doing much to earn the displeasure of his subjects – "held the Essenes *(Essēnoi)* in such high esteem, thinking more highly of them than was consistent with a merely human nature". The Essenes, adds Josephus, "follow the same way of life as do those whom the Greeks call Pythagoreans". Pythagoras was at that time regarded as the source of Greek esoteric and mystical teaching. As a consequence of his high opinion of them, Herod even released them from an otherwise mandatory obligation to swear an oath of fealty to himself.[9]

Josephus concludes his description of the Essenes in *The Jewish War* by noting that there was more than one order of Essenes, and a less austere group did permit marriage, but only under certain conditions:

> There is yet another order of Essenes *(Essēnoi),* who agree with the rest regarding their way of life, their customs and their rules, and differ from them only in their views concerning marriage. They think that those who decline to marry forfeit the principal part of human life, which is the continuation of the race, and further that if everyone followed their example that the entire human race would then rapidly

> disappear. However, they give their wives three years' probation, and do not marry them until the regularity of their periods proves them capable of child-bearing. They have no intercourse with them during pregnancy, thus demonstrating that their motive in marriage is not self-indulgence but the procreation of children. In the bath, the women wear a dress, the men a loincloth. Such are the customs of this order.
>
> *Josephus, Jewish War 2:8.13; cf. J2 pp.384–85, JCW p.478, JWW p.129*

Without additional cross-references from other sources of the same period, it is not possible to determine how accurate and complete a picture is presented by Josephus. The account of Philo Judaeus, writing several decades earlier, however, fills in a little more of the detail, and is generally in agreement with Josephus. Philo, having a greater personal interest in the spiritual life, is perhaps more sympathetic to their way of life, though – living in Alexandria – he may have had less opportunity to observe them at first hand. Like Josephus, he speaks of them as living a spiritual life, apart from other people:

> Palestine and Syria, too, are not barren of exemplary wisdom and virtue. In these countries live a considerable portion of the very populous nation of the Jews. Included among them are certain persons, more than four thousand in number, it is said, known as Essenes *(Essaioi).* Their name – which is, I think, a variation, though the form of the Greek is inexact, of *hosiotēs* (holiness) – is given to them, because they are above all men devoted to the service of God, not by offering animal sacrifices, but by resolving rather to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity.
>
> The first thing about these people is that they live in villages, avoiding the cities because of the habitual iniquities of those who dwell there; for they know that the company of such people would have a deadening effect upon their own souls, just as a disease can be picked up from a pestilential atmosphere. Some of them cultivate the land and others pursue such crafts as are in harmony with peace; thus do they benefit themselves and those who come in contact with them. They hoard no treasure of gold or silver, nor do they acquire great tracts of land because they desire the revenues therefrom; but they seek only what is required for the necessities of life. For while they stand almost unique among the whole of mankind in that they have become moneyless and landless by deliberate action rather than by lack of good fortune, they deem themselves to be exceedingly rich, because they consider frugality with contentment to be, as indeed it is, an abundance of wealth.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Every Good Man is Born Free 12; cf. PCW9 pp.52–55, WPJ3 p.523*

They live peaceful lives, and make no weapons of any kind; nor do they involve themselves in commerce, nor – since they believe in the equality of all men – do they keep slaves:

> Among these men you will find not a single maker of arrows, javelins, swords, helmets, breastplates or shields, nor, in general, any makers of weapons or military machines, nor anybody plying any trade concerned with war, nor even occupied with those activities of a peaceful kind that can be easily perverted to wicked purposes; for they have not the slightest idea concerning commerce – either wholesale, retail, or marine – but they renounce and keep aloof from everything that can possibly afford any inducement to covetousness.
>
> Not a single slave is to be found among them, but all are free, exchanging services with each other; and they denounce the owners of slaves, not only for their injustice in corrupting the principle of equality, but also for their impiety in annulling the statutes of nature, which has born and reared them all equally, like a mother, and created them all as genuine brothers, not in mere name only, but in actual reality. But this natural kinship of all human beings to one another has been thrown into confusion by a designing covetousness, which continually wishes to surpass others in good fortune, engendering alienation in place of affection, and enmity in place of friendship.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Every Good Man is Born Free 12;*
> *cf. PCW9 pp.54–57, WPJ3 pp.523–24*

Their philosophy is essentially practical and relates entirely to the spiritual and ethical life. Philo is speaking here of a traditional division of classical philosophy into logic, physics and cosmology, and ethics:

> As for philosophy, they abandon the logical part to quibbling verbalists as unnecessary for the acquisition of virtue, and the natural part to speculators as too rarefied for human nature to master – only retaining that part which includes contemplation of the existence of God and the creation of the universe. But it is the ethical part to which they devote all their attention, taking as their instructors the laws of their ancestors, which it would have been impossible for the human mind to devise without divine inspiration.
>
> Now, in these laws, they are instructed at other times, but most especially on the seventh day; for that day is considered sacred, during which they abstain from all other activities and proceed to sacred places, which they call synagogues. And there they sit, arranged in rows according to their age, the younger below the elder, listening with attentive ears and with a decorum befitting the occasion. Then one

among them picks up one of the books and reads aloud, while another of particular proficiency steps forward and explains whatever is difficult to understand; for a great many of their precepts are expressed in an enigmatic and allegorical manner, and in this they emulate the traditions of the past.

They are taught piety, holiness, justice, domestic and civic conduct, and knowledge of what is naturally good or bad or indifferent, and how to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong. In this, they take three things as their defining standard: love of God, love of virtue, and love of humanity.

Their love of God they demonstrate in a multitude of ways: by a constant and unbroken purity throughout their entire lives, by abstinence from oaths, by truthfulness, and by their belief in the principle that the Godhead is the cause of all things good and nothing bad.

Their love of virtue is revealed by their freedom from the love of money or reputation or indulgence in pleasure, and by their self-control, fortitude, and also moderation, simplicity, contentment, absence of pride, respect for the law, steadiness, and everything of that nature.

Their love of man they show by their benevolence, and their sense of equality and fellowship, which defies description, although a few words concerning it will not be out of place.

*Philo Judaeus, Every Good Man is Born Free 12;*
*cf. PCW9 pp.56–59, WPJ3 pp.524–25*

Philo then goes into greater detail concerning their moral and ethical philosophy, as it finds practical expression in their communal way of life. Like Josephus, who may well have read Philo's account, he is full of praise for their exemplary sense of sharing:

Firstly, then, no one's house is so entirely his own that it is not in some sense shared by all; for besides the fact that they dwell together in communities, their door is also open to visitors from elsewhere who share their convictions. Again, they all share a single treasury and their expenses are shared equally; their clothes are held in common and also their food, since they all eat together in communal canteens. In no other community can we find the custom of sharing roof, life and board more firmly established in actual practice.

And this is no more than one would expect; for whatever wages they earn for a day's work, they do not keep as their own, but place them in the common purse, and allow the advantage thus accruing to be shared by those who wish to use it. In this way, the sick are not neglected because they are unable to contribute; for the community

> has the means to meet the cost of their treatment out of the common purse, so that they can support them liberally and abundantly, and in full confidence. To elders, too, is given the same respect and care that actual children give to their parents, and they receive in many ways an abundant and generous maintenance for their latter years.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Every Good Man is Born Free 12;*
> *cf. PCW9 pp.58–61, WPJ3 p.525*

Philo clearly admires their ideals. So excellent was their way of life, he goes on, that even tyrants felt obliged to permit them to continue with their peaceful existence:

> Such are the diligent practitioners of virtue produced by a philosophy free from the pedantry of Greek wordiness – a philosophy that sets its pupils to exercise themselves in praiseworthy deeds, by which the liberty that can never be enslaved (*i.e.* spiritual freedom) becomes firmly established.
>
> And of this there is a witness. Many are the potentates of every variety of disposition and character who on various occasions have raised themselves to power over the country. Some of these have endeavoured to surpass even ferocious wild beasts in their savagery, leaving no sort of inhumanity untried. They have overseen the wholesale slaughter of their subjects, and have even torn them to pieces while still alive, like butchers hacking them limb from limb; and they have not desisted until that justice which oversees human affairs has at last visited them with the same calamities.
>
> Others have transformed this wild frenzy into another kind of wickedness. Acting with an intense degree of savagery, they talked with people quietly, but the mask of their milder language failed to conceal the ferocity of their real disposition. Fawning like treacherous dogs, they have wrought irremediable evils, leaving behind them, throughout the cities, the unforgettable sufferings of their victims as monuments of their impiety and inhumanity.
>
> Yet not one of these, neither the immoderately cruel tyrants nor the more treacherous and hypocritical oppressors, was ever able to bring any real accusation against the community of the Essenes *(Essaioi)* or holy ones *(hosioi)* here described. Subdued by the virtue of these men, they all treated them as self-governing and free by nature, not subject to the frown of any human being, and have extolled their communal meals and that ineffable sense of fellowship, which bears ample witness to a perfect and supremely happy life.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Every Good Man is Born Free 13;*
> *cf. PCW9 pp.60–63, WPJ3 pp.525–26*

In another text, Philo again extols the virtues of their communal and mutually caring manner of life. Here he speaks of a "Lawgiver" – possibly Moses, as scholars generally presume, though who he is is not mentioned:

> Multitudes of his disciples has the Lawgiver trained for the life of fellowship. These people are called Essenes *(Essaioi),* an appellation awarded them, I imagine, because of their great holiness *(hosiotēs).* They dwell in many cities of Judaea, and in many villages, grouped in great and populous communities. Their persuasion does not arise from their family background – for family ties are not identified with voluntary association – but from their desire for virtue and their love of gentleness and humanity.
>
> In any event, there are no children among the Essenes *(Essaioi),* nor even adolescents or the newly bearded, since such persons are unstable, with a waywardness corresponding to the immaturity of their age. But all are full-grown men, some even already declining towards old age, no longer carried away by the tide of the body nor under the influence of the passions, but enjoying the true and only real freedom.
>
> A witness to this is to be found in their way of life. None of them tries to acquire any private property, neither house, nor slave, nor estate, nor flocks and herds, nor any of the other things amassed and abundantly procured by wealth. Instead, they put everything into the common stock, and enjoy one common general benefit from it all. They live together, formed into groups, bands of comradeship with common meals, doing everything throughout their lives to serve the common good. They have various occupations at which they labour with untiring application, never pleading cold or heat or any extreme of weather as an excuse.
>
> Before the sun rises they betake themselves to their daily work, not quitting until it sets, after which they return home rejoicing as much as those who have been exercising themselves in gymnastic competitions. For they consider the activities to which they devote themselves, whatever they may be, to be of more value to life, more pleasing to body and soul, and of more enduring benefit, than mere athletic exercise, in as much as they can still be practised with enthusiasm when bodily vigour is past its prime.
>
> Some of them are devoted to the practice of agriculture, being skilful in such things as sowing and planting; others are herdsmen, experienced in the management of every kind of animal; some are beekeepers. Others – to avoid the sufferings forced upon us by any lack of our essential needs – work at handicrafts and shrink from no innocent way of procuring a livelihood. Yet each of them, upon receiving the wages of these very different occupations, gives it to

whoever has been appointed treasurer. And he receives it and immediately goes and purchases whatever is necessary, and provides them with food in abundance, and anything else that human life requires. Thus having each day a common life and a common table, they are content with the same things, being lovers of frugality and moderation, averse to all sumptuousness and extravagance as a disease of both body and soul.

And not only is their table in common, but their clothing also. For in winter they have a stock of stout coats, and in the summer light cheap shirts, so that he who wishes may easily take any garment that he likes, since what one has is regarded as belonging to all, and conversely what all have belongs to every individual.

Likewise, if anyone is sick, he is cared for from the common purse, and tended with care and thoughtfulness by all. And old men, too, even if they are childless, are treated as though they were fathers not only of many children, but of particularly happy and affectionate offspring. Often they end their lives in a most happy, prosperous and carefully attended old age – so many are those who give them precedence and honour as their due, ministering to them as a duty, voluntarily and deliberately accepted, rather than from any tie of natural affection.

*Philo Judaeus, Hypothetica 11:1–13; cf. PCW9 pp.436–43, WPJ4 pp.219–21*

Like Josephus, he observes that they live celibate and single lives:

They eschew marriage since they are acutely aware that it is the sole or principal threat to the continuation of communal life, and also because they practise a high degree of celibacy. No Essene *(Essaios)* takes a wife, because a wife is a selfish creature, inordinately jealous and adept at beguiling the morals of her husband and seducing him by her continuous guile. For by her indulgence in inveigling talk and all other kinds of hypocrisy, she plays her part like an actress on the stage. First she allures the sight and hearing and, when these subjects have been ensnared, she then cajoles the sovereign mind. And if children come, she becomes full of pride and bold speaking, and now speaks openly and with confidence of all those things that previously she had only hinted at covertly and in a veiled manner; and casting aside all shame, she induces her husband to commit actions that are antithetical to the life of fellowship. For he who is either bound fast in the love-lures of a woman or, giving way to natural instinct, makes his children his first care, ceases to be the same to others, and unconsciously becomes a different man, passing from freedom into slavery.

This then is the life of these Essenes, a life so enviable that not only commoners but even mighty kings look upon them with admiration

> and respect, and the approbation and honours that they give add further veneration to their venerable name.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Hypothetica 11:14–18; cf. PCW9 pp.442–43, WPJ4 pp.221–22*

With these two reports and Pliny's brief comment, the sum total of extant knowledge might have rested. An extraordinary mid-twentieth-century discovery, however, of a wealth of very ancient vellum and papyrus scrolls, many of them broken into numerous fragments, lying in eleven caves near the western shores of the Dead Sea, close by the ruins of the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran, may shed further light upon the lives and beliefs of this ancient brotherhood. For one of the earliest theories to emerge concerning this community, and the apparently associated library hidden in these caves, was that this was the Essene site spoken of by Pliny.

Scholars are divided in their opinions, particularly because there is no reference in any of the scrolls to the Essenes, nor are these diverse documents representative of only one school of thought, nor indeed are the Essenes mentioned in any other Hebrew or Aramaic documents of that time. From these Dead Sea Scrolls, however, it is clear that the community – whoever they were – did at one time have a great teacher or lawgiver. He is unnamed and is referred to as the righteous (spiritual) teacher or the righteous one *(ẓaddik).* And among the many scrolls are some devotional and often ecstatic psalms of great beauty, normally attributed to this teacher, and which bear all the hallmarks of a mystic's pen.

But who was this otherwise unknown teacher of righteousness whose followers treated him as their spiritual master? And was the Qumran site his headquarters – situated conveniently ten miles south of Jericho and ten miles to the east of Jerusalem – within easy access but sufficiently far away to avoid the business of urban life? No one really knows.

Although the Essenes have been the subject of a great deal of twentieth-century literature, much of it of dubious authenticity, the least that can be said is that the Essenes played a significant part in Jewish mysticism in pre-Christian and early Christian times.

Both the Essenes and the Dead Sea Scrolls have been cited in the search for Christian origins and antecedents. But apart from the use of language and idioms common to the period, there is no clear connection between the scrolls and Jesus or John the Baptist. In fact, it is generally reckoned that many of the texts pre-date Jesus. Even so, these psalms express – often in guarded language – a high mystic teaching. Understandably, their style is also similar to that of the biblical *Psalms,* as well as the pre-Christian *Psalms of Solomon,* and the early Christian and deeply mystical *Odes of Solomon.* It must also be of significance that both the early Christians in Palestine and the writers of the scrolls called themselves the *Ebionim,* the 'Poor Ones'. The most likely explanation is that the teacher of righteousness, the Essenes, John

the Baptist, Jesus, and probably the writers of the earlier wisdom literature such as Jesus ben Sirach, were all representative of the esoteric or mystic tradition in Palestine and Judaism at that time. Little, however, is really known of Jewish esoteric movements in the last two centuries BCE and the first century CE.

See also: **Essenes** (1.4).

1. Philo Judaeus, *Every Good Man is Born Free* 12; *cf. PCW9* pp.54–55.
2. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* V:15.
3. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food* 4:11–13, *SWPF* pp.147–51.
4. Jerome, *Against Jovinianus* 2:14.118.
5. Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:8.7, *J2* pp.376–77.
6. See Todd Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes, JDED* pp.52–53.
7. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17:13.3, *J8* pp.532–33, *JCW* p.375.
8. Josephus, *Antiquities* 13:11.2, *J7* pp.382–83, *JCW* p.282.
9. Josephus, *Antiquities* 15:10.4, *J8* pp.178–81, *JCW* p.333.

**ʿeved Yahweh** (He) *Lit.* servant *(ʿeved)* of God *(Yahweh);* slave of God; a faithful devotee who is obedient to and serves God in every way; a biblical term for a prophet or spiritual guide, as one who lives in the divine will; also the name for the most sacred sequence of prayers in the Jewish liturgy recited on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). *ʿEved* is related to the Hebrew *ʿavodah* (service, work), which is used for service to God. *ʿEved* is also used synonymously in the Hebrew Bible with *mesharet.*

According to *1 Kings,* the true servants of God are those who "walk before Him with all their heart", who follow the path that God has indicated for them. Mystically, this implies the spiritual path within, the inner journey of meditation through the various levels of higher consciousness, travelled by the true lover of God in total devotion. King David and the prophets Moses and Elijah are among the biblical figures who are called God's servants, implying that they were His true devotees. David is called the *ʿeved Yahweh* in the introduction to psalms eighteen and thirty-six:

> To the chief musician of David, the servant of the Lord *(ʿeved Yahweh),* who spoke to the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord saved him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.
>
> *Psalms 18:1, JCL*

In *1 Kings,* Solomon praises God who, he says, is always with His servants *(ʿeved):*

> Lord God of Israel, there is no God like You, in heaven above or on earth beneath, who keeps covenant and mercy with Your servants *(ʿeved)* who walk before You with all their heart.
>
> *1 Kings 8:23, JCL*

Praying to God on behalf of the Israelites, Solomon refers to both himself and Moses as servants of the Divine:

> Forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions where they have transgressed against You, and give them compassion before those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them. For they are Your people, and Your inheritance, whom You brought forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron, that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant *(ʿeved),* and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them in all that they call for to You. For You did set them apart from among all the people of the earth, to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by the hand of Moses Your servant *(ʿeved),* when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.
>
> *1 Kings 8:50–53, JCL*

Elijah also refers to himself as the servant of God:

> And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant *(ʿeved),* and that I have done all these things at Your word."
>
> *1 Kings 18:36; cf. JCL*

The prophet known to biblical scholars as the Second Isaiah – part author of the book of *Isaiah* – also calls himself the servant of God *(ʿeved Yahweh).* He has been chosen by God and invested with His spirit to perform a particular mission – to bring awareness of truth, justice and the divine presence to humanity. He is an intermediary between God and man, in the same way as Moses, Joshua and other prophets did before him. In the first of the 'Servant Songs', as this group of poems in *Isaiah* is sometimes called, it is God Himself who declares that the prophet is His faithful servant. The prophet is filled with the divine Spirit *(Ruʿaḥ ha-kodesh).* God 'says' that His prophet has been sent is response to His "covenant" or compact with the people, to fulfil His promise of redemption. He is a "light to the nations" whose mission is to bring sight to the spiritually blind and freedom to those who sit in the prison of spiritual darkness of the material world:

Behold my servant *('eved),* whom I uphold:
my elect, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he shall bring forth judgment to the nations.
He shall not cry, nor lift up,
nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
A bruised reed shall he not break,
and the dimly burning flax shall he not quench;
He shall bring forth judgment to truth.
He shall not fail nor be discouraged,
till he has set judgment in the earth;
And the islands shall wait for his *Torah* (teaching).

Thus said God the Lord, He who created the heavens,
and stretched them out;
He who spread forth the earth,
and that which comes out of it;
He who gives breath to the people upon it,
and spirit to those who walk in it:
I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness,
and will hold your hand, and will keep you;
And give you for a covenant of the people,
for a light to the nations;
To open the blind eyes,
to bring out the prisoners from the prison,
and those who sit in darkness, out of the prison house.

*Isaiah 42:1–7, JCL*

See also: **servant**.

**false prophet**, **pseudo-prophet** (Gk. *pseudo-prophētēs*) One who claims or considers himself to be a prophet (He. *navi,* Gk. *prophētēs*), without possessing the inner spiritual stature of a true prophet; understood simplistically, as either a well-intended but self-deceived person or a complete charlatan.

The designation is by no means simple, however, for it may be used by the followers of one religious or spiritual path for teachers of other paths or other branches of their own path. One man's false prophet may be another's way to salvation. Much depends upon what is understood by 'prophet'. In a general context, a 'prophet' can be understood as a mystic who is also a spiritual teacher. But spiritual teachings can vary, as do spiritual teachers. They come with different missions, and are likely to have reached different levels of spiritual ascent – something that is reflected in their various

doctrines. Some come to make the world a better place by teaching love, tolerance, and universal brotherhood; some to rejuvenate the religion into which they are born; some to take souls out of the creation altogether. All will generally teach some form of inner prayer, contemplation, or meditation.

It is relevant therefore for anyone seeking a spiritual path, to be aware that not all mystics or prophets are of the same spiritual calibre, and that some are simply not what they profess to be. Every good thing in life gets copied. The existence of the counterfeit proves the existence of the real, since no one tries to copy something worthless. 'False prophecy' is thus an ancient game, and a seeker can only look with open eyes, listen with open ears, and make a sincere decision based on what seems right to him or her.

The existence of false prophets appears to have been widespread in biblical times. In a biblical context, the term 'prophet' covered a broad spectrum of people, including astrologers, soothsayers, readers of omens, clairvoyants, as well as teachers of religion and spirituality. Prophecy likewise included everything from predictions of the future to religious and spiritual teaching. The most spiritually elevated kind of prophet were those inspired by the Spirit or Breath of *Yahweh,* both 'breath' and 'spirit' being translations of the one word *ru´aḥ.* As the Bible recounts in many places and in various ways, "And the Spirit of *Yahweh* came upon him. . . ."[1] False prophets and prophetesses, on the other hand, were deemed to be those "who make up prophecies out of their own heads",[2] who followed their own spirit, their own bent of mind. The prophet Ezekiel has little time for such fake prophets:

> The Lord *Yahweh* says this: "Woe to the foolish prophets *(navi)* who follow their own spirit, without seeing anything! Like jackals in a ruin, so are your prophets, Israel."
>
> *Ezekiel 13:3–4, KJV*

But distinguishing between the two was not easy, and it is clear that there was no dearth of prophets to choose from. This is evident from a dialogue related in *1 Kings* between the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah:

> The king of Israel then called the prophets *(navi)* together, about four hundred of them. "Should I go and attack Ramoth in Gilead," he asked, "or should I hold back?" "Go ahead," they replied, "For *Yahweh* has already given it to the king."
>
> Jehoshaphat, however, said, "Is there no other prophet *(navi)* of *Yahweh* here, so that we can enquire through him?"
>
> The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is one more man through whom we can consult *Yahweh,* but I hate him because he never has a favourable prophecy for me, only unfavourable ones; he

> is Micaiah son of Imlah." "I hope the king's words are unjustified," said Jehoshaphat.
>
> The king of Israel then summoned a court official and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah immediately."
>
> *1 Kings 22:6–9, NJB*

According to *Deuteronomy,* the penalty for false prophecy was extreme: death – so it was necessary to be sure who was 'false' and who was 'true'. Two distinguishing criteria are offered. The first is the ability to predict the future correctly (though it might have taken some time before results were to hand):

> The prophet *(navi)* who presumes to say something in My name which I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. You may be privately wondering, "How are we to tell that a prophecy does not come from *Yahweh?*" When a prophet *(navi)* speaks in the name of *Yahweh* and the thing does not happen and the word is not fulfilled, then it has not been said by *Yahweh.* The prophet *(navi)* has spoken presumptuously. You have nothing to fear from him.
>
> *Deuteronomy 18:20–22, NJB*

The second criterion is that a true prophet should uphold the religion of Israel, even if their predictions are otherwise accurate:

> If a prophet *(navi)* or a dreamer of dreams arises among you, offering you some sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder comes about; and if he then says to you, "Let us follow other gods (hitherto unknown to you) and serve them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet *(navi)* or to the dreams of that dreamer. *Yahweh* your God is testing you to know if you love *Yahweh* your God with all your heart and all your soul.... That prophet *(navi)* or that dreamer of dreams must be put to death, since he has preached apostasy from *Yahweh* your God who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the place of slave labour; and he would have diverted you from the way in which *Yahweh* your God has commanded you to walk. You must banish this evil from among you.
>
> *Deuteronomy 13:2–4, 6; cf. NJB*

Although prophets, true or false, were clearly a part of the religious scene in biblical times, there were periods when some – along with some of the priests – became dissolute and drunken. The prophet Isaiah upbraids such 'prophets':

> These, too, are reeling with wine,
> staggering from strong drink.
> Priest and prophet *(navi)* are reeling from strong drink,
> they are muddled with wine;
> Strong drink makes them stagger,
> they totter when they are having visions,
> they stumble when they are giving judgment.
> Yes, all the tables are covered with vomit,
> not a place left clean.
>
> *Isaiah 28:7–8, JB*

Jeremiah is no less scathing. Here, he speaks in the name of God:

> "I have had a dream," they say, "I have had a dream!" How long are there to be those among the prophets *(navi)* who prophesy lies, and are in fact prophets *(navi)* of their own delusions? They are doing their best, by means of the dreams that they keep telling each other, to make My people forget My name, just as their ancestors forgot My name in favour of Baal. Let the prophet *(navi)* who has had a dream tell it for a dream! And let him who receives a word from Me, deliver My word accurately!
>
> *Jeremiah 23:25–28, NJB*

Some centuries later, the first-century Philo Judaeus summarizes a situation that seems to be little changed:

> All those persons who pursue the spurious and pretended kind of prophecy rank their conjectures and guesses with truth, perverting sincerity, and easily influencing those who are of unstable disposition, as a violent wind, when blowing in a contrary direction, tosses about and overturns vessels without ballast, preventing them from anchoring in the safe havens of truth. For such persons think it proper to say whatever they conjecture, not as if they were things that they themselves had found out, but as if they were divine oracles revealed to themselves alone, thus more completely inducing the great and numerous crowds that gather around them to accept their fraud. Such persons our lawgiver (Moses) very appropriately calls false prophets *(pseudo-prophētēs)* – those who adulterate true prophecy, and overshadow what is genuine with their spurious inventions.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Special Laws 4:8; cf. PCW8 pp.38–39, WPJ3 pp.366–67*

Philo (*c.*25 BCE – 50 CE) was writing in mid-first century Alexandria, at the very beginning of what was to become the Christian era. It was a time when

mystics, gnostics, holy men, seers, clairvoyants, soothsayers, diviners, astrologers, fortune-tellers and interpreters of dreams were widespread throughout the Hellenistic world, and the Greek word *prophētēs* encompassed them all. Much of this interest originated in Mesopotamia, home of the ancient Chaldaean astrologers and the Zoroastrian *magi.* Schools of astrology flourished, and even the schools of Greek philosophy became occupied with the subject. Though he does not say exactly what he means by the term, Jesus advises his disciples against "false prophets", saying that they can be identified "by their fruits" – by their character and behaviour, and that of their followers:

> Beware of false prophets *(pseudo-prophētēs),*
> which come to you in sheep's clothing,
> but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
> You will know them by their fruits:
> do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
>
> *Matthew 7:15–16; cf. KJV*

New Testament scholars are generally uncertain whether the sayings attributed to Jesus really reflect something that he said or are an interpolation of oral Christian tradition or of the gospel writers themselves. Less likely to have been the words of Jesus are the apocalyptic passages in *Mark* and *Matthew,*[3] warning that before the Day of Judgment:

> If any man shall say to you, "Lo, here is Christ;" or, "Lo, he is there;" believe him not. For false Christs and false prophets *(pseudo-prophētēs)* shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.
>
> *Mark 13:21–22, KJV*

In early Christian times, and even before, anyone who preached the gospel of the Holy Spirit was called a prophet. Prophecy meant little more than teaching Christianity, whether or not in an inspired or pseudo-inspired manner. Preachers were known as 'apostles' or 'prophets'. With the spread of Christianity, one of the earliest problems was itinerant freeloaders who claimed to be prophets and apostles, but were in fact only on the lookout for food and lodging – to exploit the gullible for personal gain. An early Christian manual, the *Didachē,* addresses the problem by providing instructions on how to identify such individuals. If an "apostle" or "prophet" stays more than two days, asks for money, does not practise what he preaches, or asks for a meal while 'inspired by the spirit', he is to be regarded as a false prophet:

> Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord, but do not let him stay more than one day or, if need be, a second as well;

> if he stays three days, he is a false prophet *(pseudo-prophētēs).* And when an apostle goes forth, let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night's lodging; if he asks for money, he is a false prophet *(pseudo-prophētēs).*… Not everyone who speaks 'in the spirit' is a prophet *(prophētēs),* unless he has the behaviour of the Lord. From his behaviour, then, the false prophet *(pseudo-prophētēs)* and the true prophet *(prophētēs)* can be known. No prophet *(prophētēs)* who orders a meal in the spirit shall eat of it: otherwise he is a false prophet *(pseudo-prophētēs).* And any prophet *(prophētēs)* who teaches the truth, if he does not practise what he preaches, is a false prophet *(pseudo-prophētēs).*
>
> *Didachē 11:4–6, 8–10; cf. AF1 pp.326–27*

A characteristic aspect of early Christianity was gnosticism. Gnostics believed in the necessity of a saviour who would rescue them from the material world. For some groups, this saviour was Jesus, but others gave allegiance to other saviours. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of early Christian writers castigated all such alternative spiritual leaders as false prophets. Perhaps the earliest-known gnostic of this era was the mid-first-century Simon Magus, a Samaritan mentioned in *Acts*[4] and a contemporary of Jesus. Simon Magus was commonly targeted by the early Christians as a false prophet. He is mentioned throughout the *Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions,* where he is said to have been a disciple of John the Baptist.[5] To Christian heresiologists such as Epiphanius, Hippolytus and Irenaeus – who wrote zealous condemnations of the gnostics, often grossly distorting gnostic beliefs – all such gnostic saviours were false prophets.

It is unlikely that there has ever been a time in human history when 'false prophets', according to someone's definition, have not flourished. Several centuries later, in medieval Constantinople, Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022), a disciple of Symeon the Studite, writes of the great help that can be derived from a holy "guide". Even so, he recommends exercising discrimination, because there are also so many "deceivers and false prophets":

> Implore God with prayers and tears to send you a guide who is dispassionate and holy. But you yourself should also study the divine writings – especially the works of the fathers that deal with the practice of the virtues – so that you can compare the teachings of your master with them; for thus you will see and observe them as in a mirror. Take to heart and keep in mind those of his teachings that agree with the divine writings, but separate out and reject those that are false and incongruent. Otherwise you will be led astray. For in these days there are all too many deceivers and false prophets *(pseudo-prophētēs).* A blind person who undertakes to guide others is a deceiver plunging

> into the pit of destruction those who follow him. As the Lord said: "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit."[6]
>
> *St Symeon the New Theologian, Practical Texts 33–34, Philokalia, PCT4 pp.30–31*

See also: **gnosticism** (1.6), **prophet**, **prophet of the Truth**.

1. *1 Samuel* 10:6, 10; 19:20; *2 Samuel* 23:2 (David); *2 Kings* 2:9 (Elijah); *2 Chronicles* 15:1; 20:14; 24:20; *Isaiah* 48:16; 61:1; *Micah* 3:8; *Numbers* 11:17 (Moses), 25–26; 24:2; *Zechariah* 7:12.
2. *Ezekiel* 13:17, *JB.*
3. *Matthew* 24:11, 23–24.
4. *Acts* 8:9–24.
5. *Clementine Homilies* 2:23, *CH* p.42; *Clementine Recognitions* 2:8, *CR* p.197.
6. *Matthew* 15:14.

**fāngshì** (C) *Lit.* method *(fāng)* specialist *(shì);* one who practises magic, divination, sorcery, or alchemy; an alchemist, a healer, a magician; a master of recipes and methods; a master of esoterica (secrets known only to an initiated minority).

The *fāngshì* came into prominence in China during the third century CE, concurrent with the emergence of popular, organized forms of religious Daoism *(dàojiào).* Especially active at the Imperial court, a *fāngshì* practised divination, healing, astrology, dream interpretation, purifications, exorcisms, travel to other worlds, and acted as a spirit medium and prophet. He combined substances of plant, animal and mineral origin into magic and healing potions, used talismans *(fú),* performed certain physical exercises and breathing techniques to help prolong life, and appealed to various deities for assistance. His activities included shamanistic, spiritualistic and magical practices, some of which were already flourishing several hundred years BCE. In fact, the *wū* (shaman) of ancient times is thought by some scholars to have been the precursor of the *fāngshì.*

The first alchemical experiments recorded were attempts made by the *fāngshì* Lǐ Shǎojūn (*fl.c.*133 BCE) at the court of Emperor Wǔ of Hàn to transform cinnabar (mercury sulphide) into gold. Lǐ Shǎojūn promoted *wàidān* (outer alchemy) as a means of achieving the Daoist goal of immortality. He not only claimed to know various recipes for prolonging life, but also claimed to be immortal himself. He restricted his diet, performed personal hygiene exercises, and introduced veneration of the deity *Zàojūn* (god of the kitchen, revered to this day), to whom he appealed for help with his practices.

A Daoist *fāngshì* belonged to one of two main schools of alchemical thought: *nèidān* (inner alchemy) or *wàidān* (outer alchemy). Although these schools shared immortality as their common aim, each believed the other

to have misinterpreted the means of attaining it. During their early stages of development, the two schools coexisted and were accorded a similar standing, a view that changed around the sixth century CE. Practitioners of *wàidān* had been focused on the discovery of an 'elixir of immortality' made from material substances, such as mercury and lead. But a series of deaths by poisoning among the *wàidān fāngshì,* their patients and their disciples, as a result of their experimentations, understandably resulted in the school's decline in popularity. By the thirteenth century, *wàidān* was no longer prominent.

In mystical Daoism *(dàojiā),* the goal of spiritual immortality is foremost, with the pursuit of physical health and longevity being regarded merely as a support to the spiritual quest. Many *fāngshì* abandoned the attempt to discover a substance made from minerals that would result in physical immortality. Turning instead to the quest for spiritual immortality, they replaced *wàidān* (outer, physical) with *nèidān* (inner, spiritual) practices, including meditation.

What happened in Daoism exemplifies the process by which spiritual teachings become diluted when interpreted literally or materially. The original spiritual teachings of the Daoist ancients became overshadowed by the advent of the outer practices of *wàidān.* However, through teachers of the inner spiritual practices of *nèidān,* the original truth was resurrected and realized, with much of the terminology of *wàidān* being perpetuated, but infused with an understanding of its spiritual import.

See also: **dān**, **wàidān**, **wū**.

**faqīh** (A/P) *Lit.* a person of knowledge *(fiqh);* specifically, a person versed in Islamic law *(fiqh);* a scholar of Islamic law.

In Sufism, since gnosis was regarded as a far higher form of knowledge than intellectual learning, scholars were not always accorded the highest respect. Referring to the intoxication of divine love as "lovemaking and drunkenness", and to the divine beloved as a "heart-ravisher", Saʿdī writes:

> Be off, O learned scholar *(faqīh),* spare us, for God's sake!
> Stick to your asceticism and abstinence,
> and we will keep to our lovemaking and drunkenness.
> The man of sense should surrender his heart to a heart-ravisher;
> For it is better that he should be your focus of worship
> than that you should worship yourself.
>
> *Saʿdī, Badāyiʿ 185:7–8, KSSS p.390; cf. BOS p.202*

Rūmī relates the story of a vain *faqīh* who is robbed of his turban, the proud insignia of the intellectual and scholar, only for the thief to discover that it

is a fake, stuffed with old rags to make it appear grander than it really is. The turban symbolizes the intellect, which displays itself as possessing a far greater understanding than it actually does:

A certain scholar *(faqīh)* had collected some old rags
and wound them into his turban,
in order that it might become big and look grand
when he entered the assembly. . . .
He had clipped the rags from various garments
and outwardly embellished the turban with them.
The exterior of the turban was like a robe of paradise:
inwardly, it was shameful and ugly, like a hypocrite.
Shreds of a dervish-cloak, and cotton and fur,
were buried inside that turban.
He had set out towards the college at dawn,
that by means of this false dignity he might gain advancement.

A clothes thief stood waiting on the dark road,
waiting to ply his trade.
Snatching the turban from the man's head,
he ran off, intent on accomplishing his purpose.
At this, the scholar *(faqīh)* shouted after him, saying,
"O son, undo the turban, then run off with it.
With the same speed that you are fleeing, as if with four wings,
unwrap the gift you are carrying off.
Undo it and feel it with your hand:
then take it if you want – I will sanction that."

When the fleeing man undid the turban,
a hundred thousand rags dropped upon the road.
Of that big fake turban, there remained in the robber's hand
only a length of old cloth.
He dashed the rag on the ground, saying,
"O worthless man, by this fraud
you have deprived me of any benefit."

*Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1578–92; cf. MJR4 pp.359–60*

The thief – the soul – realizes too late that the intellect is only fake understanding. He has wasted his life in pursuit of a sham.

See also: **fiqh** (▸3).

**faqīr** (A) (pl. *fuqarā'*) *Lit.* poor, needy; one who is poor or needy; a poor one, a beggar; from *faqr* (poverty); anglicized as 'fakir', 'fakeer' or 'faqir'; in general usage, a holy man, an ascetic, a religious mendicant; one who has renounced the world in order to attain the benefits of the hereafter; a Sufi who has renounced both this world and the hereafter in his quest for union with God; a name used for a member of some Sufi orders; mystically, either one who feels himself to be spiritually lacking and more in need of divine mercy than worldly assistance, or one who is 'poor' with regard to the ego-self, who has become empty of ego; more or less synonymous with the Persian, *darvīsh* (dervish), which is commonly used in western areas of the Middle East in place of *faqīr;* a term that has become associated with magicians and miracle workers, which is a debasement of its real meaning.

The term is used in the *Qur'ān,* where it implies the spiritual poverty of the individual before God:

> Behold, you are called upon to give, in the cause of *Allāh.* Yet some among you are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls. For *Allāh* is rich, and you are poor *(fuqarā').* If you pay no heed, He will replace you with others who will bear no resemblance to yourself!
>
> *Qur'ān 47:38; cf. AYA, KPA, MGK*

A life of poverty is endorsed by a *ḥadīth* (traditional saying) in which Muḥammad says: "Poverty *(faqr)* is my pride."[1] As an ideal, this implies giving up all wealth and possessions, retaining nothing for the future, and trusting that God will provide one's daily needs. While some Sufis have taken this literally, others have seen in it a more spiritual meaning. The true *faqīr,* they say, is one who has realized that whatever he may have, actually, he has nothing. Therefore he has nothing to lose. Possessions will not make him rich, nor will lack of them make him poor. Everything belongs to God: neither is the rich man rich, nor the poor man poor. In a chapter on poverty *(faqr),* Hujwīrī explains:

> One of the moderns says, "The *faqīr* is not he whose hand is empty of provisions, but he whose nature is empty of desires." . . . Shiblī says: "The *faqīr* does not rest content with anything except God," because he has no other object of desire.
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb II, KMM pp.28–29, KM p.25*

And:

> The poor man *(faqīr)* has nothing, and can suffer no loss. He does not become rich by having anything, nor indigent by having nothing:

> both these conditions are alike to him in respect of his poverty *(faqr).* It is permitted that he should be more joyful when he has nothing, for the *shaykhs* have said: "The more straitened one is in circumstances, the more expansive (cheerful and happy) is one's spiritual state," because it is unlucky for a dervish to have property: if he 'imprisons' anything for his own use, he himself is 'imprisoned' in the same proportion. The friends of God live by means of His secret bounties. Worldly wealth holds them back from the path of contentment *(riżā).*
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb II, KMM p.23; cf. KM p.20*

Other Sufis have also provided their definitions of *faqīr.* He is one who entertains no desires or "hope of reward":

> The *faqīr* is one who desires nothing from the world in his quest for God. His reasons for renouncing the world involve neither hope of reward, nor fear of retribution, nor desire to lighten his account on the Day of Resurrection.… Another aim of the *faqīr* is to bring about concentration of consciousness in order to experience heartfelt spiritual practice.
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.53; cf. in SSE6 p.106*

He is also patient, generous and calm under all circumstances:

> The precondition for being a *faqīr* is the accomplishment of three things: maintaining patience when one has nothing, giving away that which one has, and remaining calm, quiet and undisturbed in the face of tribulation. When one has achieved these three things, one has nothing to fear in losing.
>
> *Ibn Khafīf Shīrāzī, Sīrat, SSK p.215, in SSE6 p.106*

A number of Sufis have pointed out that simply adopting the name of *faqīr* does not imply that a person has become devoid of self. The *nafs* (lower mind) must first be brought under control:

> When Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jalāʾ was asked when one becomes worthy to be called a *faqīr,* he replied, "Whenever there ceases to be any outward or inward expectation on the part of the *nafs.*"
>
> *Anṣārī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah 214, TSAA p.244, in SSE6 p.106*

This implies that spiritual poverty – absence of the ego-self – has become an integral part of the *faqīr:*

> Ibrāhīm ibn Mawlid recounts that he was present when Ibn Jalāʾ was asked when one became worthy to be called a *faqīr.* The latter replied, "Whenever poverty *(faqr)* becomes a part of you. If this is but a claim, it is not poverty *(faqr),* for a claim involves consciousness of self. Whenever poverty *(faqr)* transcends a claim, being free of self, it becomes true poverty *(faqr),* and he who experiences this is the true *faqīr.*"
>
> *Al-Qushayrī, Risālah, RQQQ p.135, in SSE6 p.106*

The creed of the *faqīr* is good moral and social conduct, detachment from the world, and attachment to God:

> Sahl ibn ʿAbd Allāh Tustarī said, "The principles of our creed are sevenfold: espousal of God's book, emulation of God's Prophet, consumption of what is lawful, refraining from annoyance of others, avoidance of sin, repentance, and respect for the rights of others."
>
> Ḥuṣrī said, "The principles of our creed are sixfold: elimination (from the mind) of what is transitory, belief in the unity of the Eternal, seclusion from one's fellows, detachment from one's homeland, forgetting what is known, and forgetting what is unknown."
>
> A *faqīr* has said, "The principles of our creed are sevenfold: performance of what is obligatory, avoidance of what is unlawful, severance from attachments, acceptance of poverty *(faqr),* abandonment of seeking, renunciation of hoarding, and detachment from anything other than God, whatever the situation."
>
> *Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, Lumaʿ fī al-Taṣawwuf, KLTA pp.217–18; cf. in SSE3 p.48*

As in many aspects of spirituality, most practitioners fall short of the ideal in their daily lives. However, there are those who are aware of this and continue the struggle, and there are those who are mostly interested in putting on a show of piety and renunciation in order to gain the approval of others:

> The truthful imitators of the *faqīr* are those whose outward aspect is adapted to the practice of poverty *(faqr),* while their inward being desires only the reality thereof despite their continuing inclination towards wealth. They exert themselves to the rigours of poverty *(faqr),* whereas the real *faqīr* considers poverty *(faqr)* a blessing from God and constantly offers thanks for the duties involved in its practice.
>
> The false imitators of the *faqīr* are those whose outward aspect is adapted to the practice of poverty *(faqr)* while their inward being is unaware of the reality thereof. The object of the practitioner is to gain approval in the eyes of others in order to draw benefits from them. This group is also known as poseurs.
>
> *Tahānawī, Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3 p.55, in SSE6 p.117*

Although the *faqīr* and the Sufi are both in search of God, a distinction is often made between the Sufi who has made God the centre of his existence, and the *faqīr* whose life is focused on his renunciation:

> Abū ʿAbd Allāh Khafīf said, "The *ṣūfī* is one whom God has chosen to be His friend, while the *faqīr* is one who purges and purifies himself through poverty *(faqr)* in order to be close to God."
>
> *Jāmī, Nafaḥāt al-Uns, NUJ p.12, in SSE6 p.111*

The *faqīr*'s quest for heaven is therefore regarded as inferior to the Sufi's quest for God:

> *Faqīrs* possess nothing of this world, neither paraphernalia nor property. They migrate from their homelands in search of God's grace and approval, abandoning whatever they were previously involved in. The *faqīr,* however, is backward with respect to . . . the *ṣūfīs,* in that he seeks heaven and desires to gratify his *nafs,* while they seek God and desire nearness to Him.
>
> *Maḥmūd Qāshānī, Miṣbāḥ al-Hidāyah wa-Miftāḥ al-Kifāyah, MHK p.117; cf. in SSE6 p.113*

Some *faqīrs* do undoubtedly practise severe ascetic discipline, and some may also acquire power over material things and events. ʿInāyat Khān points out that this is not true mysticism, nor should such *faqīrs* be regarded as true mystics:

> We hear stories about *faqīrs* sticking knives into their cheeks and hairpins through their tongues, piercing their muscles, jumping into the fire, swallowing flames, eating thorns, but all this is juggling compared with the power of the mystic. People are often apt to compare a mystic with a juggler, but they are two different beings altogether. This does not mean that these jugglers have no power; they are powerful too. But their world is different, their object in life is different, and they have another sphere, another destiny, another destination. A mystic may not do any of the things that jugglers do, and yet the mystic may accomplish far greater things than the jugglers. A so-called man of common sense, who considers himself to be practical, cannot imagine the power that is at the command of the mystic. Only the non-mystic boasts of his power and shows off to people, whereas the mystic neither speaks about it nor does he exhibit his powers before others.
>
> Once I met a great scientist in New York, who said to me, touching his pen lying on the table, "If there is really a spiritual power, a mystic power, I would like to know if it is possible to lift this pen by this power."

> I said, "Do you think that a mystic will waste his energy in making this experiment, raising a pen in space? And if he did it, what would he have gained? Would he not sooner raise a soul higher, bringing him to another sphere, raising his ideal, his aspirations, instead of trying to raise this little pen lying on the table? What will he get for it? Praise? He does not want it. That people will believe in him? He does not care. Praise is not his object nor does he care if people believe in him. Why should he trouble about these things?"
>
> *'Ināyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK11 pp.221–22*

Hujwīrī relates a story told by the renunciate Abū Muslim Fārisī, in which the latter is reprimanded by a Sufi *shaykh* for his critical thoughts concerning the *shaykh,* who was not a renunciate. The *shaykh* points out that the *faqīr* is never described as one who contemplates continually on God, but rather as one occupied with his own "self-mortification". That is, the ascetic *faqīr* is preoccupied more with himself than with God:

> "I had always," he said, "been on unfriendly terms with the *shaykh.* Once I set out to pay him a visit. My patched frock was so dirty that it had become like leather, when I entered his presence, I found him sitting on a couch, dressed in a robe of Egyptian linen. I said to myself: 'This man claims to be a *faqīr* with all worldly encumbrances, while I claim to be a *faqīr* with all this detachment from the world. How can I agree with this man?'
>
> "He read my thoughts and, raising his head, cried: 'O Abū Muslim, in whose *dīvān* (collection of poetry) have you found that the name of *faqīr* is applied to anyone whose heart subsists in the contemplation of God?' – meaning that those who contemplate God are rich in God, whereas *fuqarā'* are occupied with self-mortification. I repented of my conceit and asked God to pardon me for such an unseemly thought."
>
> *Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb XII:5, KMM p.207; cf. KM p.165*

It is not easy to know a true saint from one who has yet to reach the highest goal. Rūmī observes that despite the difficulty in distinguishing between the multitude of contenders, there is always "one true *faqīr*", somewhere. Here, *faqīr* is being used for a mystic of the highest order:

> Among the wearers of the dervish cloak *(dalaq),*
> there is one true *faqīr:*
> Make trial, and accept him that is true.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:2937; cf. MJR2 p.373*

Seeming to care little about the various definitions, Ḥāfiẓ identifies himself as a *faqīr,* a spiritually "poor and weary" soul, when he says that he has come to the door of the beloved with only "love" to offer in exchange for divine bounty:

A weary *faqīr,* I have come to your door:
be merciful, for I have nothing to offer but your love.
*Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.137, DIH p.239; cf. DHWC (308:4) p.534; cf. in SSE6 p.105*

Due to many centuries of Muslim influence, the term *faqīr* is common in North India, and some Indian saints have spoken of the true mystic as a *faqīr.* The Indian Sufi, Sulṭān Bāhū, writes that the true *faqīr* is able to leave his body and return to it at will:

So long as you are a slave to your ego,
you will not realize God.
You know not how to die while living,
yet you allow yourself to be called a *faqīr.*
Without dying (while living), it is not fitting (to wear)
the *alfī* (the sleeveless garment of a *faqīr*) –
In vain do you put it round your neck!
O Bāhū, the name *faqīr* is only befitting,
when you can die while still living.
*Sulṭān Bāhū, Bait 66, SBU p.380; cf. SBE p.274*

Paltū, an eighteenth-century Indian saint, explains that it is the "melody of the Word", the divine creative power, that transforms a person into a true *faqīr:*

The melody of the Word makes the seeker
indifferent to the crown, and turns him into a *faqīr.*
The Word *(Shabd)* of God turns the king into a *faqīr*
and attaches him to the Lord.
The sweet melody of the Word makes the world
insipid and tasteless.
He who is struck by the Word –
how can one bring him back to worldly life?
His object is achieved,
and he cares not for the world.
Wounded, he wanders from place to place,
grievously injured by the Word.
He dies while living, but resurrects eternally.

O Paltū, he whose heart is pierced
by the arrow of the divine Melody
grows indifferent to the crown, and becomes a *faqīr.*
*Paltū, Bānī 1, Kuṇḍalī 88, PSB1 p.39, in SPLT pp.105–6*

See also: **darvesh**, **faqr** (▸4).

1. *Ḥadīth* 54.

**fǎshī** (C) *Lit.* expert *(shī)* at methods *(fǎ);* in Daoism, a master of rites, an official conductor of rituals; a specially skilled *dàoshì* (priest or priestess) or lay practitioner *(sújiā),* who is well versed in Daoist liturgies and is equipped with knowledge of the proper registers *(lù)* of the names, titles and physical descriptions of gods to be invoked and of the talismans *(fú)* used during the rites; often called red heads *(hóngtóu),* after their distinctive official headdress (usually a red scarf). In Chinese Buddhism, a *fǎshī* is one who has mastered the *sūtras* (scriptures).

A *fǎshī* might carry out healing and exorcism rituals, sometimes entering trance states characteristic of shamanism, or he might perform magico-religious ceremonies, sometimes casting spells containing vernacular expressions. Bound to his local community, a *fǎshī* also carries out rites for its protection.

In certain rituals, a *fǎshī* will work with a *dàoshì* and a *jītóng* (spirit medium), who speaks on behalf of deceased ancestors during funerary rites or of aggrieved spirits during exorcisms or healing rituals.

See also: **dàoshì**, **fú** (▸3), **jītóng**, **lù** (▸3).

**fidā'ī** (A/P) (pl. *fidā'īyūn*) *Lit.* one who offers up his life for another; a devotee, a zealot, an assassin, especially an impassioned zealot who sacrifices his life for a cause; from *fidā'* (sacrifice); in particular, a member of the *Ismā'īlīyah,* who were trained to sacrifice their lives in blind obedience to the command of their grand master.

Sufis teach death or annihilation of the self *(fanā'),* rather than physical suicide. Even so, Rūmī observes that everyone kills themselves, spiritually, for the sake of their desires. That person is "blessed" who sacrifices his ego, the death of which brings such wealth of inner spiritual life that it is as if a "hundred lives" had been "saved":

Men are amazed at the *fidā'ī,*
but everyone of us is a *fidā'ī* in his behaviour.

Blessed is he who has sacrificed his body
for the sake of something for which
it is worthwhile to sacrifice one's self.
For everyone is devoted to some calling
wherein he spends his life and is killed –
Is killed somewhere in the East or West,
at which time neither the desirer nor the thing desired remains.
But that fortunate man is devoted to a calling
wherein a hundred lives are saved in being killed.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī V:3542–46; cf. MJR6 p.212*

Possibly, Rūmī is also making a veiled allusion to reincarnation: by the death of the ego, the soul is saved from many future reincarnations.

**fisher**, **fisherman**, **fisher of souls**, **chief fisher** Mystically, a metaphor for the masters or saviours who catch souls in the rivers, lakes and marshes or save them from the stormy seas of this world, and take them back to God.

Fishing imagery is not uncommon in the literature of the ancient Middle East, and is prevalent in Christian texts. According to *Matthew,* the compiler of which is copying from *Mark* at this point, Jesus says to Peter and his brother Andrew, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."[1] Alluding to this incident, the Creative Word itself was sometimes called the "Net".[2] The gospel stories associated with miraculous fishing trips may also owe their origins to a literal interpretation and misunderstanding of the masters as "fishers of men".[3]

Echoes of Jesus' famous saying abound in Christian literature, but as a metaphor for mystics, it seems to have even earlier origins. In *Ezekiel,* the prophet relates an allegory or parable, told as a revelation or a vision, in which a river flows out from under the threshold of the Temple at Jerusalem, increasing in volume as it flows along. All manner of fish live and thrive in this river. The prophet writes:

Wherever the river flows,
all living creatures teeming in it will live.
Fish will be very plentiful,
for wherever the water goes it brings health,
and life teems wherever the river flows.

There will be fishermen on its banks;
fishing nets will be spread from ʿEin-gedi to ʿEin-eglaʹyim.
The fish will be as varied and as plentiful
as the fish of the Great Sea (the Mediterranean).

*Ezekiel 47:9–10, JB*

The narrative must be allegorical for there is no river at the earthly Jerusalem. The "river" is the Life Stream of the Word flowing out from the heavenly Jerusalem, from the real "Temple" of God, the source of life and being, the spiritual centre to which all worship is addressed. In this river swim all the souls in creation, of many different kinds, whether they know the origin of their life force or not. And all along its banks are "fishermen", probably an allusion to the prophets or mystics.

The prophet Jeremiah, writing in what seems to be an allegory depicting the return of souls to God from their dispersion in the creation, speaks similarly of the "many fishermen" who will be sent to collect the Israelites from their dispersion through "all the countries":

> People will . . . say, "As *Yahweh* lives who brought the Israelites back from the land of the north and all the countries to which he had driven them." I shall bring them back to the very soil I gave their ancestors. Watch, I shall send for many fishermen, *Yahweh* declares, and these will fish them up.
>
> *Jeremiah 16:14–16, NJB*

They will be brought back "to the very soil I gave their ancestors": they will be returned to their ancestral and original home, their true spiritual home with God. Those who find them and bring them home he calls "fishermen" – seemingly a metaphor for the saviours. But the Old Testament is in as much of a muddle as the New, maybe more, and the literature of that period being so allegorical, it is not always easy to determine the meaning with certainty.

Perhaps the most extensive use of fishing imagery is found among the discourses, sayings, stories and allegories attributed to John the Baptist in the Mandaean *John-Book,* where an elaborate allegory is related of the fisher who comes to this world to collect his souls. He is the "chief fisher", the "fisher who eats no fish". His duty is to catch the "good fish", the "fish who eat no filth". These, he carries away in a "ship whose wings are of glory, that sails along as in flight . . . in the heart of the heaven", steered by a "rudder of Truth" (clearly a metaphorical ship!). He scares away the great fish-eating bird with the music of his fisherman's flute. His chosen fish (souls) are attracted by his "Call" and the sound of his "Voice sublime". They listen to his "wondrous discourses", the divine Music, and are taken back to the "regions of light".

The other fish, "who eat foul-smelling water-fennel" and are easily tempted by a bait of "bad dates", are left to a host of evil fishers who obstruct the work of the chief fisher and have no interest in the welfare of the fish they catch. They are always quarrelling with each other, deceiving one another in a variety of ways, and they eat bad fish.

The interpretation is straightforward. The master (the "chief fisher") comes to the world to collect those souls (the "fish") who have lost interest in its

foul nature. The remainder stay here to be caught and eaten up by the forces who administer this world. The story contains many technical fishing terms used in an allegorical manner, a number of which have evaded all attempts at translation, and the following extracts provide the essence of what is actually a story of some considerable length.[4] It begins with a declaration of the "chief fisher":

> "A fisher am I, a fisher elect among fishers.
> A fisher am I who among the fishers is chosen,
> the Head of all catchers of fish.
> I know the shallows of the waters; . . .
> I come to the net grounds,
> to the shallows and all the fishing spots,
> and search the marsh in the dark all over."
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.144, in PSW p.130; cf. GJB p.71, JM pp.144–45*

The "elect" fisher is the saviour who comes to fish souls out of this world. He knows all the ways of the world, "its shallows", its "net grounds" and "all the fishing spots" – all the places that attract the fish, and where they congregate. The "marsh" of this world is in the "dark", but the saviour has the power to find fish even in darkness such as this.

The allegory has a number of explanatory comments scattered throughout, in case the reader should miss the spiritual import. For instance, while searching the shallows for his fish, the fisher says: "I pushed aside the swimmers who hinder Life's way."[5] He keeps away all those who obstruct the way to God, known to the Mandaeans as "Great Life" or simply "Life". He then adds:

> "The fisherman's trident that I have in my hand
> is instead a *margna* select, a staff of Pure Water,
> at whose sight the other fishers tremble.
> I sit in a boat of glory,
> and come into this world of the fleeting."
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.144, in PSW p.131; cf. GJB p.72, JM p.145*

His "fisherman's trident", used for catching fish in the shallow waters, is a staff of "Pure" or Living "Water", the "staff" also being a symbol for the Tree of Life (another metaphor for the Word) in Semitic literature. His boat is that of light and glory, the column of divine creative Sound coming from God and leading back to Him. Upon seeing this mystic "trident", the other "fishers" – the teachers and administrative powers of this "fleeting" world – "tremble", for this is the Power from which all other powers are drawn. It is also the Power by which these derivative powers may be conquered. The fisher continues:

"The water by my boat is not ruffled,
and no sound of my boat is heard.
Before me stands Hībil;
At my side, Shitil of the sweet Name is to be seen;
Close by me, close in front of me,
Anosh sits and proclaims."

"They say:
'Greetings to you, O father, good fisher!
O fisher of the lovable Name!'"

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.144, in PSW p.131; cf. GJB p.72, JM pp.145–46*

The passage of a true saviour through this world is full of peace – the "water by my boat is not ruffled", and it makes "no sound". Hībil, Shitil and Anosh are the biblical Abel, Seth and Enoch, all of whom are taken as mythical saviours by the Mandaeans. They are the saviours of the "sweet Name" – the Name or Word of God. Here, they are used to underline who it is that the "good Fisher" represents. He is a "Fisher of the lovable Name" – a master of the Word – as in a Manichaean psalm that speaks of "Jesus . . . of the sweet Name".[6]

The writer now introduces the other fishers:

"Close by me, near to my boat,
I hear the uproar of the fishers,
the fishers who eat fish.
Their stench rushes over me –
the uproar of the fishers
and the clamour of the fishmongers
who revile and curse one another.
Everyone accuses the other."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.144–45, in PSW p.132; cf. GJB p.72, JM p.146*

These fishers are characterized as the "fishers who eat fish" and who are constantly quarrelling and disagreeing with each other, consuming the lives and attention of the people whom they teach or rule. They represent the people and the teachers of the physical universe, together with the 'devils' and 'demons' of human passions, and the higher *archons* or powers who administer this world. They are all those forces that attract the fish (the souls) into the net of the negative power. After an extensive symbolic description of how badly these "fishers" behave, the storyteller then continues:

When the chief fisher,
the head of the race of the Living,

the highest of all catchers of fish,
heard this, he said…
"Bring me my…*squbra* (a wind instrument),
that I may make a Call sound forth into the marsh,
that I may warn the fish of the depths,
and scare away the foul-smelling birds
that pursue my fish.
I will catch the great *sidma,*
and tear off his wings on the spot.
I will…blow into my *squbra.*
A true *squbra* it is,
so that the water may not mix with pitch."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.146–47, in PSW pp.132–33; cf. GJB p.73, JM p.146*

The "chief fisher" calls with his *squbra,* his fisherman's flute, to the souls in the marsh of this world. This is the beautiful and haunting divine Music that generates longing in the soul to return to God. It scares away the "foul-smelling" fish-eating birds, like the *sidma,* which is probably a species of gull, heron or cormorant, symbolizing the negative power, the chief of the *archons* or cosmic rulers of this world. The chief fisher alone has the power to render this negative power harmless. He catches the "great *sidma*" and "tears off his wings". And the instrument of the fishes' salvation is this "true *squbra*", the true Sound. It separates the pure spiritual "water" of the soul from the thick black adhesive "pitch" of this world.

When the fishers heard the Call,
their hearts fell.
One calls to the other, saying:
"Go into your inner ground.
For there is the Call of the fisher,
the fisher who eats no fish.
His Voice is not like that of a fisher,
his *squbra* not like our *squbra.*
His Voice is not like our voice,
his Discourse not like that of this world."
But the fishers just stand there:
they seek no shelter in their inner ground.
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.147, in PSW p.133; cf. GJB p.73, JM pp.147–48*

The other fishers know in their hearts the true nature of this "Call". It is the "Call" to "go into" their "inner ground" – to go within themselves. They understand that the "Call" of this fisher is different from their call, and is

not of this world. It is the "Voice" of God, the "Discourse" or Word of the Supreme, which "is not like that of this world". All the same, "they seek no shelter in their inner ground".

The divine fisher then comes upon the fishers of this world:

> As the fishers stood there, thinking it over,
> the fisher came swiftly upon them.
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.147, in PSW p.134; cf. GJB p.73, JM p.148*

According to the story, he catches them in his nets and ties them up with knots: he helps his own fish conquer the powerful forces that keep them enmeshed. Emphasizing the difference between the fish of the world and the fish who belong to the chief fisher, the fishers then beg him:

> "Free us from our bonds,
> so that your fish may not leap up to our boat.
> We do not catch those who name your Name."
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.147–48, in PSW p.134; cf. GJB p.73, JM p.149*

The fishers cannot catch those who know the saviour, who are in contact with the mystic Name of God. But the fisher shows no mercy towards their deceptive and seductive forces. In the story, he beats them and gives them a thoroughly bad time. He says, for instance:

> "I bound them in the marshes of Deception,
> and they were caught and were tied up."
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.149, in PSW p.134, GJB p.74; cf. JM p.152*

The fishers then try to appease the chief fisher, praising him, giving the writer further opportunity to depict metaphorically the characteristics of a saviour:

> When the chief of the fish catchers spoke thus,
> the fishers answered him, saying:
> "Blessed are you, O fisher,
> and blessed is your boat and your bark.
> How fair is your cast net,
> how fair the yarn that is in it.
> Fair is your cord and your lacing,
> you who are not like the fishers of this world.
> In your nets are no shellfish,
> and your trident catches no fish.

"From where have you come? Tell us!
We will be your hired servants.
We will bake bread, and stir broth,
  and bring it to you.
Eat, and the crumbs that fall from your hand –
  these will we eat and be filled by them."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.149–50,*
*in PSW pp.134–35; cf. GJB p.74, JM pp.153–54*

The saviour is a personification or incarnation of the Word. The "boat and . . . bark" of the chief fisher is the Word, by means of which he ferries souls across the stormy ocean of the creation, bringing them safely into the harbour of the Divine. Similarly, the "fair . . . cast net", "yarn", "cord" and "lacing" are all allusions to the Word, which gathers souls into itself, taking them back to God. Likewise, the "crumbs that fall from your hand" are those of the Bread of Life, the Word that provides spiritual sustenance. These are all metaphors commonly used for the creative power of God, communion with which leads to salvation.

So the fishers praise him, and offer to be his servants and to cook for him. They offer the chief fisher all the things of the world that fascinate them. But he remains unimpressed by their fawning, and replies:

"But I answered them:
'O fishers, you who lap up your filth,
  no fisher am I who fishes for fish.
I was not created to be an eater of filth.

"'A fisher am I of souls who bear witness to Life.
A poor fisher am I who calls to the souls,
  collects them together and gives them instruction.
He calls to them and bids them come
  and gather together unto him.'"
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.150, in PSW p.135; cf. GJB p.74, JM p.154*

He says that he has not come to this world for any material purpose. He has only come to call souls to himself and to take them back to God. To these souls, he says:

"If you . . . come,
  you will be saved from the foul-smelling birds.
I will save my friends, take them on high,
  and make them stand upright in my ship.

I will clothe them with robes of glory,
and wrap them around with precious light.
I will put a crown of aether upon them,
and whatever else the Greatness
will place upon their heads.
Then will they sit upon thrones,
radiating precious light.
I will bear them there, and raise them aloft."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.150–51, in PSW p.136; cf. GJB p.74, JM p.154*

Once again, these are metaphors common to early Middle Eastern literature. The "foul-smelling birds" are the forces that entrap and devour souls in obsession with materiality. The "ship" is the Word. The "robes of glory", the holy or "precious light" and the "crown of aether" are the natural light and pure spirituality of liberated souls. The "thrones" on which they sit represent the rightful power that is restored to the souls as sons of the divine King. And it is the saviour who will "raise them aloft" and "bear them" to the divine Eternity.

This is the destiny of the souls who are called by the chief fisher, caught in the net of the Word, and carried to their eternal home in his divine "ship". As for the other fishers, he says:

"But you . . . shall stay here behind.
The portion of filth and of filthy doings
shall be your portion.
On the day when the light ascends,
the darkness will return to its region.
I and my disciples will ascend,
and behold the region of light."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.151, in PSW p.136; cf. GJB pp.74–75, JM p.154*

Souls who desire materiality remain here, while a master and his disciples ascend to the eternal "region of light". Then, becoming even more explicit, the chief fisher describes the mission upon which God – "Great Life" – has sent him:

"A fisher am I of Great Life,
a fisher am I of the Mighty;
A fisher am I of Great Life,
an envoy whom Life has sent.
He (Great Life) spoke to me:
'Go, catch fish who eat no filth,
fish who eat no water fennel,
and do not reek of foul-smelling fennel.

They do not approach to devour bad dates,
and get caught in the nets of the marsh.'"
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.151, in PSW p.137;*
*cf. GJB p.75, JM pp.154–55*

He has come to catch the "fish who eat no filth", who are free from the "reek" of worldliness. They are not tempted by the bait of "bad dates", of material desires, that lead souls into the "nets" of illusion that are spread out to catch them in the "marsh" of this world.

He then describes the Word as a "noose" and as a "ship" whose "ropes are ropes of glory" in which he will carry these souls back to God:

"(Great) Life knotted a noose for me,
and built a ship for me that does not fade –
A ship whose wings are of glory,
that sails along as in flight,
whose wings cannot be torn off.

"It is a well-equipped ship
that sails in the heart of heaven.
Its ropes are ropes of glory,
its rudder, a rudder of Truth. . . .
On the bows are set lamps
that in the wildest of tempests
are not extinguished.

"All ships that see me make obeisance submissively to me.
Submissively, they make me obeisance,
and come to show their devotion to me."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.151–52, in PSW pp.137–38;*
*cf. GJB p.75, JM p.155*

The "ship" of the Word is the true vessel, having a "rudder of Truth", steering souls towards God. Its divine light is not extinguished by the "wildest of tempests", by the great turbulence of life encountered in this world. "All ships that see me" – all other powers in creation – "make obeisance submissively to me": everything submits to the primal power of the true Word of God. The storyteller then continues:

In the bows stands the fisher
who delivers wondrous discourses.
Lamps are there,
whose wicks shift not hither and thither. . . .

He wears no ring of Deception,
  and with white robes is he clad.

He calls to the fish of the sea and speaks to them:
"Give heed to yourselves in the world!
Beware of the foul-smelling birds who fly above you.
If you give heed to yourselves, my brothers,
  I will be a helper for you –
A helper and a support
  out of the regions of darkness into the region of light."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.152–53, in PSW p.138;*
*cf. GJB pp.75–76, JM pp.155–56*

The fisher of souls "delivers wondrous discourses" – he brings the music of the divine Word with him for distribution to the souls he collects. His light is steady: there is nothing shifty or shifting about him; his mind is stable and under control. Nor is there anything of "Deception" or the power of illusion within him. He is clad "with white robes": inwardly he is full of purity and reality. He advises souls to beware of the fish eaters – the mind and its powers, which devour souls – and to take him as a "helper" out of the realms of "darkness" into the "region of light".

The other fishers then make an even more concerted bid to win him to their side. They offer to make him a partner in all their ventures. They try to entice him, saying:

"We will make you familiar with the fishers:
  be our great partner and take a share as we do.
Grant us a share in your ship,
  and take a share in our ship.
A bargain! Take from us as partner,
  and grant us a share in your ship.
Grant us a share, and we will give you
  a share in what we possess.

"Join your ship with ours,
  and clothe yourself in black as we do;
So that, if you hold your lantern on high,
  you may find something;
So that the fish may not see your glory,
  and your ship may catch some fish."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.153–54, in PSW p.139;*
*cf. GJB p.76, JM pp.156–57*

And much more of the same ilk do they add. But the fishers reveal a devious purpose, for they continue:

"Nets are laid down, . . .
which are filled with bad dates as bait,
which cause them to eat death.
Woe to the fish who are blinded by them,
whose eyes see not the light.
Wise are the fish who know them,
they pass by all of the baits.
The others repair thither, . . .
and the nets will be for them a lodging.
One in a thousand sees it,
and in two thousand, two will see it."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.156–57, in PSW p.139; cf. GJB p.77, JM p.158*

They know that their task is to keep the fish away from the chief fisher and that, for the most part, they will be successful, for only "one in a thousand" will see that the bait and allurement they are offered is actually "bad dates", leading to their capture and death. But the fisher of souls is not interested in their scheming. He sees through it, dismissing them through the power of his Word, "his Voice sublime":

He spoke with his Voice.
He discoursed with his Voice sublime,
and said to the catchers of fish:
"Be far from me, you foul-smelling fishers,
you fishers who mix poison.
Begone, begone, catch fish who eat your own filth. . . .

"I am no fisher who catches just any fish:
my fish are tested.
They are not caught on a hook with bad dates,
a mess that my fish do not eat. . . .
They do not sink into the muddy water,
and chase after the lures of Deception."
*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.157, in PSW p.140; cf. GJB pp.77–78, JM p.159*

His souls are not deceived by the seductions and illusions of worldly life. He has come to guide his own fish through all the difficult places, and to bear them with him to eternity:

"I lead my friends onward, raise them on high in my ship,
and guide them past all the tax gatherers.
I guide them through the passage of outrage,
the realm where fish are caught.
I give them the power to escape from the fish eaters. . . .

"I and my friends of the Truth
will find a place in Life's *Shekhinah* (Presence).
Into the Height will I bear them,
on thrones surrounded by standards of glory."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.159–60, in PSW p.140; cf. GJB pp.78–79, JM pp.160–61*

In the ship of the Word, they are safe from "all the tax gatherers", the powers that rule the inner realms of the mind, exacting full payment from all souls for the debt of sin collected in this world, the stormy "passage of outrage". A saviour and his disciples "find a place in Life's *Shekhinah*", in the presence of God. They ascend to the "Height" of eternity where, metaphorically, they sit on "thrones . . . of glory".

The storyteller then adds that ultimately the evil fishers are overcome, and the fisher of souls takes his catch back to his own heavenly home:

The Seven (the powers of sin and destiny) . . . are vanquished,
and the stranger-man is victorious.
The man of piety tested them, and was victorious,
and helped the whole of his race to victory.

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.160, in PSW p.141; cf. GJB p.79, JM p.161*

All souls in this realm of physicality and illusion are strangers or foreigners, living far from their eternal spiritual home. The saviour is the ultimate "stranger-man", for he is the supreme Spirit living in the material universe. He is the true "man of piety" or spirituality who helps the "whole of his race" of chosen souls to attain spiritual liberation and "victory".

The story then concludes with a final dialogue between the fishers and the "pure fisher", initiated when the fisher gives another warning to the fish. The storyteller relates:

It is the voice of the pure fisher who calls,
instructing the fish of the sea in the shallows.
He speaks to them: . . .
"Guard yourselves from the fishers who catch fish."

*Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.160, in PSW p.141; cf. GJB p.79, JM p.161*

To this the fishers respond by querying where the fisher has come from and who he is, for they have not seen him in the fishing grounds before:

> When the fisher spoke thus, warning all the fish,
> when the fishers heard his voice,
> they came forward and gathered around him.
> They came forward to ask him questions,
> not knowing where he came from.
>
> "Where were you before, O fisher," they asked him,
> "that we did not hear your voice in the marsh?...
> Your ship is not tarred all over with pitch,
> and you are unlike the fishers of this world....
> Your ship is not like our ship:
> it shines by night like the sun.
> Your ship is perfected in aether,
> and wondrous standards are unfurled above it."
>
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM pp.160–61, in PSW p.142; cf. GJB pp.79–80, JM pp.161–62*

As before, the fisher's "voice" is the Word and so, too, is his "ship" of light. It calls and carries souls to their original spiritual home, "perfected in aether", the subtlest and most refined of all realms.

Many other things do the fishers then say to the chief fisher and he responds with such perfect replies that, in the end, they even pledge themselves to help him:

> When they heard this from the fisher who has come here,
> and understood (his message), they spoke to him:
> "Have compassion, forbearance and mercy on us,
> and forgive us our sins and transgressions.
> We are your slaves: show yourself indulgent towards us.
> We will look after your fish that none of them fails.
> We will be the servants of your disciples,
> who name your Name of Truth *(Kushṭa).*
> We will continue to look after all who name your Name."
>
> *Mandaean John-Book, JMM p.163, in PSW p.142; cf. GJB p.80, JM pp.163–64*

So in the end, even the evil fishers are made to serve the divine purpose. When a soul really begins to travel the inner path, then all the powers in creation, far from being a hindrance, actually become 'friends' and a source of help. Divine love is a power that no other power can withstand. Ultimately, all powers are subservient to the power of love, the power of the Word or Name.

See also: **Net** (3.1).

1. *Matthew* 4:19, *KJV; cf. Mark* 1:17.
2. See *e.g. GJ* index: Net.
3. *John* 21:12–14; *Luke* 5:11, 24:41–43; see also *GJ* pp.626, 942–44.
4. *Mandaean John-Book, JMM* pp.143–63, in *PSW* pp.128–43; *cf. GJB* pp.71–80, *JM* pp.144–64.
5. *Mandaean John-Book, JMM* pp.144–45, in *PSW* p.131; *cf. GJB* pp.71–72, *JM* p.145.
6. *Psalms of Thomas* XII, *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB* p.217; see also *GJ* p.258.

**foundation stone** See **stone that the builders rejected**.

**friend**, **friend of God**, **friend of the lights** (He. *ohav, re'a,* Gk. *philos, philos Theou*) Mystically, a metaphor for the soul who is close to God, or for God Himself, or for the spiritual master or saviour who is the friend of both God and the souls he redeems, in the sense that he cares for each soul and always acts in a soul's best spiritual interests.

Since human beings are inherently bound by their humanity, with restricted power and vision, only God or a saint who has attained union with Him can be an entirely unfettered spiritual friend of the soul. The term has been used since earliest times in Greek, Jewish, Christian, gnostic, Manichaean, Muslim, and Buddhist traditions.

In the Greek world, the spiritual guide had been known as a friend since at least the time of Pythagoras (*c.*580–500 BCE). The metaphor was so well known that a fragment from the fifth-century (BCE) playwright Euripidēs reads:

> I regard the wise man *(sophos anēr)* as my friend *(philos),* even if he lives in a distant place and I never see him with my eyes.
>
> *Euripidēs, Fragment 902, in TGFN p.650, in CFFC p.74*

The passage is quoted at the beginning of several letters by the fourth century Christian bishop, Basil of Caesarea.[1] Basil was one of many among the early church fathers who were influenced by the several 'Lives of Pythagoras' that proliferated during the third to fourth centuries CE, more than 800 years after the time of the Greek sage. The image of Pythagoras as the friend of his disciples in Pythagorean communities contributed to the formulation of the tenets of Christian friendship and life in monastic communities.[2] According to Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras:*

> He was unusually devoted to his friends *(philos)* and was the first to declare, "What friends *(philoi)* own, they own in common," and "A friend *(philos)* is a second self." When they were in good health, he always spent his time with them; when they were sick in body, he nursed them; when afflicted in mind, he comforted them, some with incantations and magic charms, others with music.
>
> *Porphyry, Life of Pythagoras 33; cf. PSLP pp.129–30*

Aristotle's views on friendship, many of which were transmitted by Cicero, were equally influential. He called the wise man *(sophos),* the 'friend of the gods *(theophilos)*'. The wise man cultivated this divine friendship, he said, by valuing, attending to, and developing the *nous* (the divine or spiritual part in a human being), which led him to achieving bliss and happiness within himself:

> It seems likely that he who exercises and cultivates his spirit *(nous)* seems to be both in the best disposition, and is also the most beloved of the gods. For if, as is generally believed, the gods do care for human affairs, then it would be reasonable to presume that they delight in that part of a human being which is best and most akin to themselves, namely the spirit *(nous).* And that they will reward those who love and honour that part the most, because the gods care for their friends *(philoi)* and for those who act rightly and nobly. Now it is perfectly clear that all these qualities belong most of all to the wise man *(sophos).* He is, therefore, most beloved by the gods. Likewise, the same is also the happiest.
>
> *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 10:8; cf. NEA p.269*

Plato, too, speaking through Socratēs, describes how a person who comes to "see Beauty itself, uncorrupted, pure, unmixed and not infected by human flesh and all the colours and vanities of mortal life" manifests "perfect virtue" in himself.[3] And then:

> When he has brought forth and nourished this perfect virtue, he will be called a friend of God *(theophilos),* and if it is ever given to a man to be immortal, it shall be given to him.
>
> *Plato, Symposium 212a; cf. CDP p.563*

The third-century Plotinus (205–270 CE) similarly describes devotees of the Divine as "friends of God *(theōi philoi),* humbly acquiescing with the cosmic dispensation when in the total course of things some pain must be brought to them"[4] – that is, they are content in the divine will. And Socratēs, of course, is well-known for having addressed his followers, and detractors, too, as his "friends *(philoi)*".

The idea of intimate communion with God is also found among the earliest Jewish texts. Moses is often described as a friend of God, because, according to *Exodus,* when He meets God in the tabernacle:

> *Yahweh* would speak with Moses face to face,
> as a man speaks with his friend *(reʿa).*
> *Exodus 33:11, JB*

Traditionally, because of his obedience and willingness to sacrifice even his own son at God's command, the biblical Abraham has long been described as the friend of God in Judaism, Christianity,[5] and Islam,[6] where he is known as Khalīl (Friend). *2 Chronicles* speaks of "Abraham Your friend *(ohav)* forever;"[7] in *Isaiah,* God speaks of "Abraham My friend *(ohav);*"[8] and a prayer addressed to God in *Daniel* speaks of "Abraham Your beloved *(ēgapēmenos)*".[9]

In the *Song of Songs,* understood as an allegory of the love between the soul and God, or – as Christianity would have it – between Christ and the soul or the church, the lover utters a paean of praise, describing the beauty of the divine beloved, which ends with:

> His conversation is sweetness itself,
> he is altogether lovable.
> Such is my beloved *(dod),* such is my friend *(reʿa),*
> O daughters of Jerusalem.
> *Song of Songs 5:16, JB*

The beloved responds to the lovers (the souls), calling them his "dearest friends (*dodim,* beloveds)", inviting them into his "garden" (the spiritual realms), where they can "drink deep" of spiritual nourishment, expressed as the common metaphors of "wine", "milk", and "honey":

> I come into my garden,
> my sister, my promised bride;
> I gather my myrrh and balsam,
> I eat my honey and my honeycomb,
> I drink my wine and my milk.
> Eat, friends *(reʿim),* and drink:
> drink deep, my dearest friends *(dodim).*
> *Song of Songs 5:1, JB*

The *Wisdom of Solomon,* written in Greek probably during the first century BCE, uses the term explicitly. It is Wisdom, the Creative Word, the divine creative power that makes a man a prophet and a friend of God:

In each generation she (Wisdom) passes into holy souls,
she makes them friends of God *(philoi Theou)* and prophets;
For God loves only the man who lives with Wisdom.

*Wisdom of Solomon 7:27–28, JB*

In the Christian gospels, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the bridegroom, and to himself as the "friend *(philos)* of the bridegroom, . . . who rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's Voice".[10] The early Alexandrian Christian, Origen, interprets these friends as "the angels and the prophets".[11] Jesus also describes his disciples as his "friends":

Greater love has no man than this:
that a man lay down his life for his friends *(philoi).*
You are my friends *(philoi),* if you do whatever I command you.
Henceforth I will not call you servants –
for the servant knows not what his lord is doing:
I have called you friends *(philoi):*
for all things that I have heard of my Father
I have made known to you.

*John 15:13–15; cf. KJV*

When he speaks of laying down his life, Jesus is referring to the sacrifice of his own life for the spiritual welfare of his disciples. In the apocryphal *Acts of John,* paraphrasing Luke's gospel,[12] the apostle John consoles the disciples, whom he describes as the "friends" of the Father:

Peace be unto you, little flock,
for your Father has willed to give unto you
the kingdom which is reserved for His friends.

*History of John, AAA p.28*

And when John addresses a young man (who, in the allegorical story, he is about to raise from the dead), he describes Jesus as the "friend", the saviour who saves his disciples from Satan ("the worst Enemy"):

O youth who knew not your Creator,
nor perceived the saviour of men,
and was ignorant of your true friend,
and did therefore fall into the snare of the worst Enemy.

*Acts of John 17; cf. ANT p.261*

Later Christians have likewise described God and Jesus as the one sure friend:

> The friend we have, heaven knows, is the best of friends, nor can honey compare with his counsels. Our friend is our saviour; his counsels lead us to salvation.
>
> *François de Sales, Love of God 8:9, LGFS p.337*

Thomas à Kempis writes that to be and to retain Jesus as a friend requires an effort to keep the mind free from the taint of worldliness:

> It is a great art to know how to hold converse with Jesus, and to know how to keep Jesus is wisdom indeed. Be humble and a man of peace, and Jesus will abide with you. But if you turn aside to worldly things, you will soon cause Jesus to leave you, and you will lose his grace. And if you drive him away and lose him, with whom may you take refuge, and whom will you seek for your friend? Without a friend, you cannot live happily and, if Jesus is not your best friend, you will be exceedingly sad and lonely; so it is foolish to trust or delight in any other. It is better to have the whole world as your enemy, than offend Jesus. Therefore, of all dear friends, let Jesus be loved first and above all.
>
> *Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 2:8, ICTK p.77*

Julian of Norwich also describes the inner vision of the beloved as "the lovely, blessed sight of our everlasting friend".[13]

God and the saviour are the friends of the soul and, conversely, those who love God or the saviour are his "friends". Walter Hilton is alluding to John's gospel when he writes, in the name of Jesus:

> You who are my friends . . . shall be fed with the spiritual food of the Bread of Life.
>
> *Walter Hilton, Ladder of Perfection 1:44, LPH p.54*

Here, the Bread of Life is the eternal Word.

Speaking of the cloying sense of human limitation and the desire to be free, the anonymous writer of the *Cloud of Unknowing* says that God will teach such "spiritual friends" according to their capacity, guiding them to the heights of divine love:

> God in His wisdom will teach His spiritual friends according to the physical and moral strength of each to sustain this truth and in accordance with each one's progress and openness to His grace. He will instruct them little by little until they are completely one in the fullness of His love – that fullness possible on earth with his grace.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 44, CU p.93*

Whatever they have to go through, He will always be there for them:

> God will never disappoint those who truly abandon worldly concerns to dedicate themselves to Him. You can be certain of this: He will provide one of two things for His friends. Either they will receive an abundance of all they need or He will give them the physical stamina and a patient heart to endure want. What difference does it make which He does? It is all the same to the true contemplative.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 23, CU pp.69–70*

Sometimes, He consoles them with experiences of "unspeakable delight", even while they are still living in this world:

> In anticipation of his eternal glory, God will sometimes inflame the senses of his devout friends with unspeakable delight and consolation, even here in this life. And not just once or twice but perhaps very often, as He judges best. This delight, however, does not originate outside the person, entering through the windows of his faculties, but wells up from an excess of spiritual joy and true devotion of spirit. Comfort and delight like this need never be doubted or feared. In a word, I believe that anyone who experiences it will not be able to doubt its authenticity.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 48, CU p.98*

The anonymous author of the *Book of the Poor in Spirit* – one of the Rhineland mystics, also known as the Friends of God – focuses entirely on how a "friend of God" should live and be. God, he writes, must occupy the sole place in his mind:

> A contemplative life is elevated above all that is temporal and is an enjoyment of eternal things only. He, then, who desires to lead such a life, must necessarily depart from all that is temporal. If a man has turned himself towards the best, towards God, then God is his sole object. He enters into God and detaches himself from all creatures so that no one can speak either evil or good of him, since he is completely hidden in God. Such a man is a real friend of God.
>
> *Book of the Poor in Spirit 3:4.1, BPS pp.181–82*

In Manichaean texts, Jesus is sometimes called "Jesus the Friend",[14] while the universal saviour appears – in various phases of the Manichaean mythology – as the "light friend" or "radiant friend",[15] the "friend of the lights",[16] or more simply as the "friend":

> The world shall pass and come to nothing,
> and its works also shall perish with it.

Do you, therefore, O great elect,
lift up your eyes to the land of light:
You shall see the friend of the righteous
standing beyond the world.
*Psalms of Thomas XIII, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.219*

Likewise, in writings where the help of the saviour is invoked:

Rich friend of the beings of light!
In mercy, grant me strength,
and help me with every gift!
Array my soul, O Lord respond to me!
Help me in the midst of the Enemy!
Make pass from me all the ravages of their deceitful body,
which tortures me with pain.
You are the friend, praised and beneficent!
*Manichaean Hymns, Angād Rōshnān I:1–4; cf. MHCP pp.112–13*

And:

You have come in peace, best friend of the lights!
You have come in peace, lord of the church!
*Manichaean Hymns, HMV p.304ff.; cf. GSR p.84, ML p.11*

The term is frequently used in Mandaean writings, too, as in a psalm where the "friends" are equated with the "chosen ones". *Manda-ḍ-Hiia* ('*Gnōsis* of Life') is one of the many saviours of Mandaean mythology:

*Kushṭa* (Truth) stands by his friends,
and *Manda-ḍ-Hiia* by his chosen ones.
*Mandaean Psalm Book 43; cf. CPM p.40*

In another psalm, the "friends" are equated with the saviour's "believers":

The son of life raised his Voice . . . saying to them,
"I have brought wares to my friends,
I have brought truthful words to believers."
*Mandaean Psalm Book 119; cf. CPM pp.115–16*

In another, the friends seek the saviour on the inner planes:

Where are you going, O chosen righteous one,
whom all your friends seek –

For whom all your friends long and desire
your appearance among them?
*Mandaean Psalm Book 129; cf. CPM p.120*

Moving forward in time, the Friends of God (German, *Gottesfreunde*) was also a name for a Christian fellowship originating in fourteenth-century Basel, in Switzerland, which spread to Germany and the Netherlands. The title appears frequently in mystical Christian writings of that period, in reference to those who cultivated an active and intimate spiritual relationship with God within themselves, rather than remaining content with merely formal devotion of an outward nature. It was also used of individual members of the movement. Largely a lay organization, the movement included such well-known figures as Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, and Johann Tauler – the so-called Rhineland mystics. Some of the more outspoken members of the group had the temerity to criticize the corruption of the church. For this, and for their beliefs in general, the movement suffered considerable persecution, and some of its members were executed for heresy. Dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Roman Catholic Church was not, however, entirely suppressed. It finally erupted irrevocably in the sixteenth-century Reformation and formation of the Protestant Church.

The epithet of the 'friend' is also used by Shakespeare (1564–1616) in one of his sonnets, for his enigmatic beloved. Scholars remain undecided as to whom these sonnets were addressed. Their language, however, is in accordance with that of the mystical devotee longing to see his master, within or without. Certainly, no worldly beloved is worthy of the praise bestowed upon him or her in these sonnets, and Shakespeare is not given to sentimentality or senseless hyperbole. In this sonnet, the thought of his "dear friend" relieves him of all concerns of this world. One is tempted to think that by the "sessions of sweet silent thought" Shakespeare is making an oblique reference to meditation, which is disturbed by the "remembrance of things past", but restored to tranquillity by the thought of his "dear friend":

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,

> Which I new pay as if not paid before:
> But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
> All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.
>
> *William Shakespeare, Sonnet 30*

During the seventeenth century, the group that formed around the inspired preacher and visionary George Fox (1624–1691) also used the epithet, becoming known as the Religious Society of Friends. It is uncertain when this attribution was adopted, however, since they had previously called themselves Children of the Light, Friends of the Light, and Friends of the Truth. They also became known as Quakers after a judge in Derby in 1650, mocking George Fox's exhortation to "tremble at the word of the Lord", dubbed them so.[17] Nowadays, they commonly refer to themselves simply as 'Friends'. Fox himself is said to have been "graceful in countenance, manly in personage, grave in gesture, courteous in conversation"; "civil beyond all forms of breeding"; "plain and powerful in preaching, fervent in prayer"; "a discerner of other men's spirits, and very much master of his own"; skilful to "speak a word in due season to the conditions and capacities of most, especially to them that were weary, and wanted soul's rest"; and "valiant in asserting the truth, bold in defending it, patient in suffering for it, immovable as a rock".[18]

See also: **companion**, **dge ba'i bshes gnyen**, **friendship** (▸4).

1. *E.g.* Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 63, *BCL2* p.19.
2. C. White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century, CFFC* p.43.
3. Plato, *Symposium* 211e; *cf. PAC2* p.126.
4. Plotinus, *Enneads* 2:9.9, *PEC* p.71.
5. *E.g. James* 2:23.
6. *Qur'ān* 4:125.
7. *2 Chronicles* 20:7; *cf. KJV.*
8. *Isaiah* 41:8, *KJV.*
9. *Daniel* 3:35, *LXX.*
10. *John* 3:29; *cf. KJV.*
11. Origen, *On the Song of Songs* 2:8, *OSS* p.153.
12. *Luke* 12:32.
13. Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* 76, *RDL* p.198.
14. *Manichaean Hymns, MM2* p.323*ff., RMP* cm, *GSR* p.93; *HR2* p.49*ff., RMP* cv, *GSR* p.146; *RMP* dr, *GSR* p.146.
15. *Manichaean Hymns, GMU* p.306*ff., RMP* at, *GSR* p.44, *ML* p.120; *RMP* cb, *GSR* p.79.
16. *Manichaean Hymns, MM3* p.849*ff., RMP* ac, *GSR* p.255, *ML* p.136; *RMP* aj, *GSR* p.32; *HMV* p.304*ff., ML* p.11.
17. George Fox, *Journal, JGFN* pp.52–58.

18. Thomas Ellwood and William Penn, in *Journal of George Fox,* front matter (1694 edition); "George Fox," *Wikipedia,* ret. July 2013.

**fshuyant** (Av) *Lit.* one who cares (for others); protector, guardian; shepherd, one who tends cattle; from the root *fshu* (to nourish, to foster, to care for); a term used by Zarathushtra for the saviour or perfect master.[1] Let no harm befall the shepherd and his followers, writes Zarathushtra:

> So truly, with uplifted hearts,
> begging for the grace of *Ahura,*
> my soul and Mother Earth herself, filled with hope,
> place before *Mazdā* this request:
> Never may harm befall those who live righteously
> nor yet their shepherd *(fshuyant),*
> though they dwell among the followers of Untruth *(dregvant).*
>
> *Zarathushtra, Yasna 29:5; cf. DSZ p.55*

The metaphor of the shepherd for both God and saviour is common in Jewish, Christian, Manichaean and other spiritual literature of the Middle East. It also appears in Mesopotamian literature predating Zarathushtra, as in the Tammuz liturgical texts.

See also: **ashavan**, **māthrā**, **ratu**, **saoshyant**, **vāstrya**.

1. Zarathushtra, *Yasna* 29:5–6, 31:10.

**fuqarāʾ al-kāmilūn** (A), **fuqarā-yi kāmil** (P) *Lit.* perfect *(kāmil) faqīrs,* perfect saints. See **faqīr**.

**gaṇin** (S) *Lit.* one with a following *(gaṇa);* in Jainism, one who is responsible for or is the head of a small number of monks *(munis)* who live, study and travel as a group, but who may be initiated disciples of different *āchāryas* (teachers). In the present-day *Shvetāmbara Mūrtipūjaka* (image worshipper) tradition, the role is sometimes combined with that of a *pannyāsa* (man of knowledge, a scholar).

See also: **gaṇa**.

**gāosēng** (C) *Lit.* a senior monk; an eminent monk. Many biographies of eminent monks are recorded in Huì Jiǎo's sixth-century compilation *Gāosēng zhuàn,*[1]

including, for example, that of Zhī Dùn (*aka.* Zhī Dàolín, 314–366 CE), an eminent Chinese Buddhist monk and philosopher who derived great pleasure reading and studying the *Dàodé jīng* and the *Zhuāngzǐ.*

1. *T50* 2059.

**gardener** One who works in or takes care of a garden; mystically, an infrequently used metaphor with a range of meanings. It is a simile for the saviour, as a part of a family of metaphors in which the inner realms are the gardens (as in the "garden planted eastward in Eden"[1]), watered by the Living Water of the Word. In this sense, the term has antecedents in ancient Mesopotamian mythology. The Gardener is also God, as He who provides the spiritual 'water' to make the flowers of the soul bloom and be fragrant. The soul is likewise a gardener, toiling in her garden to make the flowers of the spirit bloom.

A poignant example of the term 'gardener' as the saviour appears in one of the Manichaean *Psalms of Thomas,* at least some of which are ancient translations of texts discovered in modern times among the Mandaean literature. First, the psalmist speaks of the disciples, the "righteous, your sons seeking after you", and then replies in the name of the creative power ("I went forth to plant a garden") who gives "orders to the gardener" – the saviour:

> Where have you gone, O chooser of the righteous,
> all your sons seeking after you?
> All your sons seeking after you,
> your beloved ones expecting you.
> Your sons seek after you,
> your beloved ones expect you daily,
> Your disciples seek after you,
> looking for your form within themselves.
>
> I went forth to plant a garden
> beyond the confines of this world,
> I chose, and planted in it the plants
> that grew in the living ones.
>
> I will give orders to the gardener:
> "Attend to my trees, my new plants;
> attend to my new plants
> that they sleep not nor slumber;
> That they sleep not nor slumber,
> that they forget not the Order (or Law)
> that has been given them."
> *Psalms of Thomas XIII, Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.218, SCMP p.120*

The master is here addressed as the "Chooser of the Righteous", underlining the fact that it is a master who chooses his disciples, not *vice versa.* His "sons" or "beloved ones" – his chosen disciples – expect him "daily": they daily hope to meet him in their meditation, in his light form.

In the poem, God speaks of planting a garden "beyond the confines of this world", recalling the equivalent statement of Jesus regarding souls ("plants") being planted by the "heavenly Father" and being "bound in heaven".[2] 'Planting' refers to initiation or baptism of disciples, indicating that the true initiation is not a ceremony of this world, but a mystic "planting" or retuning of the soul. The "gardener" is the master, whose real form is the Word.

In Christian texts, Jesus is sometimes portrayed as the gardener in reference to the gospel story of his resurrection. When the distraught Mary Magdalene comes to Jesus' tomb and finds it empty, she asks a person standing by, whom she supposes to be the gardener, where they have taken him. Only when he speaks her name in reply, does she recognize Jesus.[3] In this context, there is no reason to suppose that the term is being used metaphorically.

See also: **gardener** (7.1), **gardens** (4.1), **planted in heaven** (7.4).

1. *Genesis* 2:8*ff.*
2. *Matthew* 15:13, 16:19.
3. *John* 20:11*ff.*

**gerōn** (Gk) *Lit.* elder, old man; a leader in the early Christian church; later, in the Orthodox Church, a monastic spiritual guide. See **elder**, **staretz**.

**geshe** (T) Phonetic rendering of *dge bshes,* which is itself an abbreviation of *dge ba'i bshes gnyen* (virtuous friend, spiritual friend); a translation of the Sanskrit, *kalyāṇa-mitra.* See **dge ba'i bshes gnyen**.

**ghawth** (A), **ghawś** (P) *Lit.* help, aid, succour; deliverance from adversity; the helper, the recourse; one who comes to help when called; also, "Help!", an appeal for help; a high-ranking saint *(walī)* in the Sufi hierarchy of living saints (*awliyā',* friends), his role being to help human beings in response to their cries for assistance, especially in times of extreme difficulty.

Different Sufis have placed the *ghawth* at various places in the hierarchy of saints. Sometimes, the *ghawth* is equated with the *quṭb* (pivot, axis), sometimes with the *quṭb* when he is being called upon for help; sometimes the *ghawth* is placed alongside or below the *quṭb.*

The *ghawth* not only teaches the secrets of mystical science to his disciples, enabling their spiritual evolution, but also helps preserve the equilibrium of the world by his presence in it. Ibn al-ʿArabī writes of the *ghawth:*

> The helper *(al-ghawth)* – he is, by his essential nature, unique and alone in his time, except when the moment has led (others) to seek the protection of his loving concern.
>
> *Ibn al-ʿArabī, al-Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah, ISMA p.68*

While Hujwīrī,[1] al-Jīlānī[2] and others equate the *ghawth* with the *quṭb,* others place the *quṭb* at a higher level. Differentiating between elimination of the self, and one who has eliminated even the awareness of the elimination of the self, Niʿmat Allāh Valī writes:

> One who enjoys obliteration *(maḥq)* is known as a *ghawth,* and one who enjoys the obliteration of obliteration *(maḥq al-maḥq)* as a *quṭb.*
>
> *Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, Rasā'il, RNV4 p.244; cf. in SSE12 p.101*

ʿInāyat Khān also differentiates between the two, placing the *ghawth* and the *quṭb* above the *walī* (friend, saint), but below the *nabī* (prophet) and the *rasūl* (messenger):

> The same attribute of self-sacrifice, in its higher grade of evolution, is seen among the masters of humanity, who act as officials of the infinite government and are known in the world as messengers. Among them are holy beings of different grades, designed by *ṣūfīs* as *walī, ghawth, quṭb, nabī* and *rasūl.* They differ one from the other in degree, according to the depth to which they penetrate into the world unseen, or to the breadth of the space they occupy in the universal consciousness, and also according to the width of the circle of humanity that is placed in their charge for its guidance. *Nabī* is the guide of a community, *rasūl* has a message for the whole of humanity, and each has a certain cycle of time for his message.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 p.29*

> *Ghawth* is the next grade of the initiates (after *walī*). The influence of the *ghawth* is wider. He gives up his personality wholly to the divine guidance, and wherever this *ghawth* may be there will be an atmosphere of protection from all kinds of dangers such as floods, storms, plagues, or famines. He promotes the spiritual well-being of a community.
>
> *Quṭb* is the third degree of a master, a still higher grade, when his mind becomes focused on the divine mind, and he has, to a lesser or

> greater extent, power over all elements, as well as influence upon life. Under him there is a dominion in which he is responsible for the order and peace of souls. He governs a country or nation spiritually.
>
> *ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK9 p.130*

Rūmī does not seem particularly concerned with the categories of sainthood as described by other Sufis. His main concern is with the perfect saints, whom he refers to, especially in the *Maśnavī,* using a variety of Sufi terms. From Rūmī's perspective, no praise is too high for these saints. Speaking of his successor-to-be (Ḥusām al-Dīn) in the preface to the *Maśnavī,* Rūmī describes him as, along with many other superlatives, the *ghawth* of the time:

> (He is) the treasure of my today and my tomorrow, namely, the *shaykh,* the exemplar for them that know God and the leader of them that possess right guidance and certainty, the helper *(al-ghawth)* of humankind, the trusted keeper of hearts and consciences, the charge deposited by God among His creatures, and His choice amongst His creation, and the object of His injunctions to His Prophet and of His secrets imparted to His chosen one, the key of the treasuries of the highest heaven, the trustee of the riches stored in the earth (the body), the father of virtues, the sword *(ḥusām)* of the truth and religion *(dīn)* (*i.e.* Ḥusām al-Dīn), Ḥasan son of Muḥammad son of al-Ḥasan, generally known as Ibn Akhī Turk, the Abū Yazīd of the time, the Junayd of the age, the *ṣiddīq* (truthful one), son of a *ṣiddīq,* who was the son of a *ṣiddīq.*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I, Preface; cf. MJR2 pp.3–4*

Likewise, in a passage ostensibly in praise of Muḥammad, Rūmī is actually extolling the virtues of all saints who are the embodiment of the Primal Intelligence or creative power. According to a well-known story mentioned in the *Qurʾān,*[3] after Muḥammad's first encounter with the angel Gabriel, Muḥammad ran terrified to his wife, wrapped in his cloak. This earned him the epithet, *Muzzammil* ('One who Wraps Himself').[4] The true nature of the saints is automatically hidden from physical eyes, and it is only in the inner worlds that saints can reveal what they really are. Rūmī therefore uses the story of Muḥammad's cloak to beg the saints to grant revelation to the souls of this "reeling" world, and especially to their disciples during their night prayer or meditation. Khiżr is a legendary saint, the helper of wayfarers, material or spiritual:

> "Do not (O Muḥammad) draw your head into your cloak,
> do not cover your face, for the world is a reeling body
> and you are its (primal) Intelligence. . . .

Hark, 'stand up (in prayer) during the night,'[5]
for you are a candle, O prince:
At night a candle stands up and burns.
Without your radiance, even the bright day is night.
without your protection, the lion is captive to the hare.
Be the captain of the ship in this (stormy) sea,
for you are a second Noah, O Muḥammad."

An expert guide, with understanding, is needed for every road,
especially for the journey on water (*i.e.* this world).
Arise! Look upon the waylaid caravan (of humanity):
everywhere a ghoul (the lower mind) has become captain of the ship.
You are the Khiżr of the time,
the deliverer *(al-ghawth)* of every ship in distress:
Do not, like the Spirit of God, practise solitude.
In the eyes of this assembly, you are the candle of heaven:
cut yourself off no more, cease adopting seclusion.
This is no time for seclusion: come into the assembly:
spiritual guidance is your particular sphere,
just as Mount Qāf is the home of the *humā* (bearded griffon).

*Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1454, 1456–63; cf. MJR4 pp.352–53*

Rūmī also uses the term in its general sense of 'help'. He speaks of perfect saints, who bring help *(ghawth)* to human beings who have become forgetful of God:

The saints *(awliyā')* possess power from God:
they turn back from its course the arrow that has sped....
He that owns a village is king over bodies:
he that owns a heart *(ṣāḥib-dil)* is king over your hearts....
I dare not expound the whole of this:
hindrance thereto is coming from those at the centre.
The forgetfulness and recollection of (God's) creatures
are in his power, and he comes at their call *(faryād)* for help.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:1669, 1678, 1680–81; cf. MJR2 p.92*

1. Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* XIV, *KMM* p.269, *KM* p.214.
2. Al-Jīlānī, *Utterances, UAQJ* p.139.
3. *Qur'ān* 74:1–2.
4. *Qur'ān* 73:1.
5. *Qur'ān* 73:2.

**gnas brtan bcu drug** (T) *Lit.* sixteen *(bcu drug)* elders *(gnas brtan);* the sixteen legendary *arhats* or enlightened beings in Buddhism. See **shoḍasha sthavirāḥ**.

**Gnas chung Chos rje** (T) *Lit.* priest *(chos rje)* of Nechung (T. Gnas chung); the Nechung oracle; the official state oracle of Tibet; phonetically rendered as *Nechung Chöje.* See **Nechung Chöje**.

**gnostic** (Gk. *gnōstēs, gnōstikos*) A follower and practitioner of gnosticism; from the Greek *gnōstikos* (relating to knowledge), from *gnōstos* (known), related to *gignōskein* (to know); one who has *gnōsis* (knowledge), which is inner mystical knowledge; a name given by scholars to any of a wide variety of mystics and the mystically minded in both Judaism, early Christianity and Islam, characterized by the belief that there exists a mystical or revealed knowledge *(gnōsis)* by which all things can be understood, especially the nature of the self, God and all things of His creation. Gnosticism is a term coined by the English philosopher and poet Henry More (1614–1687) for the religious groups referred to in ancient texts as the *gnōstikoi* (those with *gnōsis*).

Gnostics formed a loosely knit movement of believers in mysticism, characterized by a belief that the soul has fallen from its true estate as particle of the divine Light and is held captive in matter until rescued by a saviour. At this point, the soul then gains *gnōsis* – true knowledge or experience of God by means of mystic revelation – and returns to Him.

Scholars have identified many different schools of gnosticism. Characteristic of gnostic doctrines are an understanding of the *Logos* as the primal creative power of God; the immortality of the soul and its reincarnation in successive bodies; an intermediate creator of the material and higher worlds; and a hierarchy of lesser deities or *archons* in the administration of creation. Gnostics sought realization of the soul's immortality while they lived, rather than awaiting a final Day of Judgment. Many gnostic doctrines developed complex creation myths and cosmogonies.

In common with other followers of mystic paths, many gnostics were also vegetarian. Among the early Christian gnostics, it seems that the majority also understood doctrines such as resurrection in a spiritual and metaphorical way, rather than literal. It is also clear that early Christians regarded Jesus as being in the same category as the gnostics, since accusations of being false or lesser teachers were levelled by early Christians at a number of the gnostics, notably the mid-first-century Simon Magus, a Samaritan mentioned in *Acts*[1] and throughout the *Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions,* and a contemporary of Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the apostles. The fact that this was a point of issue highlights the similarities between gnostic teachings and those

of Jesus, and indirectly demonstrates the esoteric and mystical character of Jesus' teachings.

The term 'gnostic' is rarely used by the gnostics themselves in their writings, in Greek or any other language, though it is used extensively by early Christian heresiologists such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and others. However, the gnostics do speak of *gnōsis,* which defines in broad terms what it meant to be a gnostic. In the gnostic texts, for instance, it says that the primal source of divine or mystic knowledge is the "Invisible One":

> I am the Invisible One within the All. . . .
> It is I who am laden with the Voice.
> It is through Me that *gnōsis* comes forth.
> *Trimorphic Protennoia 35–36, NHS28 pp.402–5*

And, echoing John's gospel,[2] a gnostic is one who "hears the Word of *gnōsis*":

> The Word existed in heaven before the earth came into existence. . . .
> He that hears the Word of *gnōsis* has ceased to have the mind of a man of earth, but has become a man of heaven. His mind has ceased to be earthly, but it has become heavenly.
> *First Book of Jeu 42:3, BC pp.10–11*

In the Hermetic texts, it is said that God sent down a "mighty bowl with the *Nous,* joining a herald (a saviour) to it", so that men could become "partakers in *gnōsis*". *Nous,* here, means spirit, and in this context the term is being used synonymously with *Logos:*

> Then as many as understood these tidings and were baptized in the *Nous,* became partakers in *gnōsis* and, having received the *Nous,* became perfect men.
> *Hermetica 4:4; cf. HAG p.61, HGCH pp.15–16, TGH2 p.87*

Or looked at from an earthly viewpoint, the soul must seek the saviour ("a guide") to experience *gnōsis:*

> Look for a guide to take you by the hand, and lead you through the gates of *gnōsis,* where clear light shines, pure from all darkness.
> *Hermetica 7:2; cf. GS p.462, TGH2 pp.120–21*

The term 'gnostic' was sometimes used in a more general sense simply for the mystic knower of God. In such contexts, its meaning is devoid of the cosmogonic mythology and doctrine normally associated with gnosticism. It is largely in this sense that the early Christian Clement of Alexandria

uses the term in his *Miscellanies,* where even Moses, who is said in *Exodus* to have known God,[3] is described as "the gnostic Moses".[4] The gnostic, says Clement, can find much edifying recreation and inspiration in Greek philosophy, and he is clear in his writings concerning the esteem in which he holds it. By this he means their mystical philosophy, not the intellectual quibbling of sophists and pedants:

> Our gnostic *(gnōstikos)* always occupies himself with the things of highest importance. But if at any time he has leisure and time for relaxation from what is of prime consequence, he applies himself to Hellenic philosophy in preference to other recreation, feasting on it as a kind of dessert at supper. Not that he neglects what is superior; but that he takes this in addition, as long as proper.... But those who give their mind to the unnecessary and superfluous points of philosophy, and addict themselves to wrangling sophisms alone, abandon what is necessary and most essential, pursuing plainly the shadows of words.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 6:18, WCA2 pp.401–2*

In essence, Clement's gnostic is a seeker of perfection and the direct experience of God, especially according to the Christian way as he understood it. Firstly, a gnostic is master of himself:

> Self-control, desirable for its own sake, perfected through knowledge, abiding ever, makes the man lord and master of himself; so that the gnostic *(gnōstikos)* is temperate and passionless, incapable of being dissolved by pleasures and pains.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 7:11, WCA2 p.455*

He is hence a man of inner peace:

> Congenial to...the gnostic *(gnōstikos)* are calmness, and rest, and peace.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 2:11, WCA2 p.33*

He is focused entirely upon God:

> The gnostic soul *(gnōstikē psychē)* must be consecrated to the Light, stripped of the integuments of matter, devoid of the frivolousness of the body and of all the passions, which are acquired through vain and lying opinions, and divested of the lusts of the flesh.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 5:11, WCA2 p.261*

In fact, the gnostic seeks the perfection of God:

> He is a gnostic *(gnōstikos)* who is as the image and likeness of God; who imitates God as far as possible – deficient in none of the things that contribute to that likeness insofar as they are compatible with human nature; practising self-restraint and endurance; living righteously; reigning over the passions; giving away whatever he has as far as possible; and doing good both by word and deed.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 2:19; cf. WCA2 p.57*

When he has reached a high level, he prays only that the depth of his contemplation will increase:

> The gnostic *(gnōstikos)* who has reached the summit will pray that contemplation may grow and abide.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 7:7, WCA2 p.439*

Whatever he is doing, he remains aware of the Divine presence:

> Holding festival, then, in our whole life, persuaded that God is always present on every side, we cultivate our fields, praising; we sail the sea, hymning.… The gnostic *(gnōstikos),* then, is very closely connected to God, being at the same time serious and cheerful in all things – serious because of the inclination of his soul towards the Divine, and cheerful because of his consideration of the blessings of humanity which God has given us.… He is, then, the truly kingly man.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 7:7; cf. WCA2 p.432*

Step by step he advances to an understanding of the primal, divine Cause:

> Real knowledge *(epistēmē),* which we affirm the gnostic *(gnōstikos)* alone possesses, is a sure comprehension, leading up through true and sure reasons to the knowledge *(gnōsis)* of the Cause.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 6:18; cf. WCA2 p.402*

Eventually, the gnostic is able to see God "face to face":[5]

> The gnostic *(gnōstikos),* by virtue of being a lover of the one true God, is the really 'perfect man' and 'friend of God', and is placed in the rank of 'son'. For these are names of nobility and knowledge, and perfection in the contemplation of God; which crowning step of advancement the gnostic soul receives, when it has become quite pure, and is reckoned

> worthy to behold everlastingly God Almighty, "face to face", as it is said. For having become wholly spiritual, and having in the spiritual church gone to what is of kindred nature, the soul abides in the peace of God.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 7:11; cf. WCA2 p.455*

Here, Clement is referring to a well-known passage from a letter from St Paul:

> For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know *(ginōskō)* in part; but then shall I know *(epiginōskō)* even as also I am known *(epiginōskō).*
>
> *1 Corinthians 13:12, KJV*

Such an inner state consists of a holiness beyond that even of the angels:

> I affirm that gnostic souls *(gnōstikai psychai)* – which surpass the way of being of all the holy angels in the grandeur of their contemplation, dwell in the blessed abodes of the gods, and are reckoned holy among the holy, . . . reaching realms higher than the higher – embrace the divine vision not by reflection, . . . but in the transcendently clear and absolutely pure, unquenchable vision that is the privilege of intensely loving souls, who hold festival through endless ages, and remain honoured with the hallmark of excellence. Such is the vision attainable by "the pure in heart."[6]
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 7:3; cf. WCA2 pp.414–15*

See also: **gnōsis** (▸3), **gnosticism** (1.6).

1. *Acts* 8:9–24.
2. *John* 1:1–3, 8:47, 18:37.
3. *Exodus* 33:11.
4. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 5:11, *WCA2* p.265.
5. *1 Corinthians* 13:12.
6. *Matthew* 5:8.

**good Samaritan** The central character in a parable attributed to Jesus in Luke's gospel. Although generally taken in modern times as a parable exemplifying human kindness and compassion, there is evidence that the intended meaning was actually as a mystic allegory, in which the good Samaritan symbolizes either Jesus in particular or – more generally – any saviour or master.

The parable is found only in *Luke,* in which setting, Jesus is explaining the meaning of the lines from *Deuteronomy* concerning the love of God,[1] to which Jesus adds that you should love "your neighbour as yourself".[2] Since

the gospels are a fusion of prior sources, it is probable that the parable is actually independent of the setting in *Luke.* According to the narrative, Jesus has been asked by a Jewish lawyer, "Who is my neighbour?":

> And Jesus answering said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his garments, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side.
>
> "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'
>
> "Which now of these three do you think was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, 'He that showed mercy on him.' Then said Jesus to him, 'Go, and do likewise.'"
>
> *Luke 10:30–37; cf. KJV, RSV*

While the moral of the story in human terms is evident, and no one would deny the importance of kindness and compassion, the specific choice of metaphors suggests that the parable also contains a deeper meaning. This is highlighted by a passage in the gnostic *Gospel of Philip.* Coming after a brief discussion of freedom, truth, sin and love, the writer says:

> Love never calls something its own, . . . it never tries to possess anything. It never says, 'this is yours' or 'this is mine', but 'all these are yours'. Spiritual love is wine and fragrance. All those who anoint themselves with it take pleasure in it. While those who are anointed are present, those nearby also profit (from the fragrance). If those anointed with ointment (the masters) withdraw from them and leave, then those not anointed, who merely stand nearby, still remain in their bad odour. The Samaritan gave nothing but wine and oil to the wounded man. It is nothing other than the (spiritual) ointment. And it healed the wounds, for "love covers a multitude of sins".[3]
>
> *Gospel of Philip 77–78; cf. GS pp.348–49, NHS20 pp.198–99*

In this interpretation, the Samaritan is the bearer of the fragrant wine of divine love and the giver of spiritual oil or ointment. He is the bestower of spiritual healing balm to the wounded man. As the exemplar of pure and unselfish

love, he must therefore be the saviour, while the wounded man is the soul left spiritually injured and destitute in this world.

It seems certain that, at least in some early Christian circles, the good Samaritan was understood to be Jesus. The fourth-century bishop Gregory of Nyssa (*c.*335–394), who wrote a number of treatises interpreting biblical texts in an allegorical and mystical manner, explains the parable as describing "God's entire economy of salvation". Speaking of Jesus as the "Word", Gregory writes that, in response to the question, "Who is my neighbour?",

> the Word explained, in the form of a story, God's entire economy of salvation. He told of man's descent from heaven, the robbers' ambush, the stripping of the garment of immortality, the wounds of sin, (and) the progress of death over (the lower) half of man's nature while his soul remained immortal.
>
> Then came the passage of the (Jewish) Law that brought no help – neither the priest nor the Levite tended the wounds of the man who fell among robbers.... And then he (the Word) came, clothed in our human nature.... He proceeded to the place of man's disaster, healed his wounds, and set him upon his own beast.
>
> *Gregory of Nyssa, On Canticles 14, GGG p.280*

There is another interesting reference to this parable in an ancient Syrian breviary. Here, although the allusion is clear, the wine has become water, probably as a reference to baptism. Mystically, it makes no difference, since both water and wine, as Living Water and Living Wine, were used as metaphors for the creative power:

> I was forsaken and beaten,
> but the son of the King in his love liberated me,
> nursed me with oil and water.
>
> *Chaldaean Breviary, BCB3 p.411, in MEM p.117*

In the Manichaean psalms, there is another passing allusion to this parable, bearing out the same allegorical interpretation:

> For all men are running about, desiring to profit their soul,
> fearing and all-confounded, desiring to save their lives.
> But the life and death of each man is in his (God's) hands,
> he knowing that perchance this is the man
> who shall be found half dead in the middle of the road.
> They all passed him by, none pitied him
> save only the faithful one who knew his soul.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXXIX; cf. MPB p.40*

In this excerpt, the "faithful one who knew his soul" is certainly the saviour. He is the only one who knows his own soul and that of others, too. And only a master is so free from the constraints of sin and destiny that he is fully trustworthy. He is faithful in his covenant to both God and man, and never fails, for his will is perfectly aligned to that of God.

Having established, therefore, the identity of the Samaritan and the wounded man, and being informed as to the true interpretation of the fragrant wine and healing ointment, the meaning of the remainder of the parable falls more or less naturally into place.

The soul descends from the heavenly Jerusalem to this world, where it falls among the thieves of worldly desires and human imperfections, and is stripped of its innate and eternal raiment, its robe of glory, being left spiritually dead. Neither the priest nor the Levite are able to help the soul, for they only have knowledge of the writings of past mystics as contained in the scriptures. Only the 'outsider', the Samaritan, the saviour, he who cares nothing for social prejudices, has the "compassion" and the capacity to help the wounded man. He treats the man's wounds with the "oil" and "wine" of the love of God and the divine Word, mounts him on his own means of transport – again, the Word – and takes him to a place of refuge, the spiritual dwellings within. Since the "thieves" have left the soul spiritually destitute, the saviour then pays all his expenses, signifying the ransom required for the forgiveness of the burden of sin.

Christian writers have interpreted the parable either from a moral or an allegorical viewpoint. Among the allegorical interpreters, Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, understands the Samaritan as the Word, and the Samaritan's "beast" as the body of the Word (*i.e.* Jesus), the "inn" as the "loving providence" of the Word that gives shelter to the soul, the "two pence *(denarii)*" as the love of God and the love of one's neighbour, and the Samaritan's offer of repayment – "when I come again" – as the second coming of Jesus.[4]

Walter Hilton sees the good Samaritan as Jesus, the wounded man as mankind, and the Samaritan's beast as the body of Jesus, upon which are borne the sins of the world.[5]

Bernard of Clairvaux interprets the good Samaritan as Jesus, the wounded man as the "sinner", the oil as his "gentleness", the wine as both the "fervent zeal" of Jesus and the repentance of the sinner, and the inn as the church, where refuge is found.[6]

See also: **healing** (7.3), **Oil** (3.1), **physician**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 6:5.
2. *Luke* 10:27.
3. *1 Peter* 4:8.
4. Gregory of Nyssa, *On Canticles* 14, *GGG* pp.280–81.

5. Walter Hilton, *Goad of Love* 7, *GLH* p.90.
6. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs* 44:3, *WBC2* p.226.

**good shepherd** See **shepherd**.

**Gosvāmī** (S), **Goswāmī** (H), **Gosāīn** (H/Pu) *Lit.* master *(sāīn)* or lord *(swāmī)* of cows *(go);* hence, master, keeper or protector of cows; a cowherd; hence, metaphorically, one who cares for others; also interpreted as master of the senses *(go);* lord, monarch, master, beloved; the Lord or spiritual master; an honorary title affixed to proper names, especially those of religious mendicants, holy men, religious personages or teachers, as in the case of the mystic poet Gosāīn Tulsīdās or Goswāmī Tulsīdās (1532–1623), author of the well-known *Rām Charit Mānas. Gosāīn* is the normal Hindi variant of *Goswāmī.*

**great one** A term with a broad spread of meaning in mystical and religious texts; in Jewish texts, God; in Christian texts, either God or Jesus;[1] in Mandaean and other gnostic texts, God, the saviour or the creative power; in Manichaean texts, God,[2] the twelve aeons (powers) of light surrounding the Father,[3] the Third Messenger,[4] the *Nous,*[5] and so on. A Manichaean psalm, for instance, speaks of the divine Word or creative power as the "treasure" or "jewel" of the saviours – the "great" and "mighty" ones:

> Oh, the treasure of the great ones of life,
> the jewel of the living, mighty ones.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, Psalms of Thomas V, MPB p.210*

Among the Mandaean texts, the "great one" is the "son of the mighty one" with the power to draw souls up to God:

> Hear me, my father, hear me! Draw me upward,
> O great one, son of the mighty one.
> *Mandaean Prayer Book 80; cf. CPM p.89*

See also: **Great One** (2.1).

1. *E.g. Acts of John, AAA* p.34.
2. *E.g. Manichaean Hymns, HR2* p.63*ff., RMP* bo, *GSR* p.60.
3. *E.g. Manichaean Hymns, MDT* p.553*ff., RMP* ah, *GSR* p.31.
4. *E.g. Manichaean Hymns, DSJM* p.95*ff., RMP* br, *GSR* p.64.
5. *Kephalaia* 38, *KOT* p.103.

**grēhma** (Av) *Lit.* devourer, greedy one; wolf; false spiritual teacher; those who seek power and followers in this world for the sake of their own hidden greed and ambition, having nothing truly spiritual to offer; a term used by Zarathushtra, in his *Gāthās,* as an epithet of the *daēvas* (priests).[1] He warns the true seekers against being misled by such people. Zarathushtra's strong language no doubt relates to the powerful hold that religious leaders can develop over unthinking people.

See also: **daēva**.

1. Zarathushtra, *Yasna* 32:12–14.

**gter ston** (T) *Lit.* one who reveals *(ston)* treasure *(gter)* or hidden treasure *(gter ma);* phonetically rendered as *tertön.* See **tertön**.

**guǎyù** (C) *Lit.* few *(guǎ)* desires *(yù);* having few desires, longings or wishes; hence, to be ascetic; an ascetic.

The life of a *guǎyù* is seen by some to provide the ideal circumstances in which to root out bad habits, and to develop and maintain those habits that lend support to the goal of purity of mind and simplicity of action. Seclusion is commonly seen as a way to exercise control over the senses and to simplify life. Some also submit themselves to austerities, such as varying degrees of poverty, sexual abstinence, sleep deprivation, dietary restrictions, and avoidance of certain foods and drinks:

> Clearing the mind, dissolving preoccupations, purifying thought, forgetting feelings, minimizing self, lessening *(guǎ)* desire *(yù),* seeing the basic, embracing the fundamental – this is meditation of the transformative Way *(Dào).* When the mind is clear and freed of preoccupations, it is possible to fathom the design of Reality; when thoughts are ended and feelings forgotten, it is possible to fathom the essence of Reality. When selfishness and desire *(yù)* disappear, it is possible to arrive at the *Dào;* when one is plain *(sù)* and simple *(pǔ),* pure *(chún)* and whole *(yī),* it is possible to know the celestial *(tiān).*
>
> *Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, BBH p.12*

Daoist *guǎyù* separate themselves from general society in order to quietly nurture their original spiritual nature. Sometimes they become recluses or hermits; sometimes they join religious communities:

Cutting off rumination, forgetting impulses *(jī),*
then there are no judgments *(shìfēi);*
Hiding one's light *(yào),*
keeping one's development *(huá)* concealed,
one is aloof from sound *(shēng)* and form *(sè).*

When desire *(yù)* and taste are minimized *(guǎ),*
basic goodness arrives;
When affairs are reduced, involvements *(yuán)* simplified,
the root of virtue *(dé)* is planted.

*Lǐ Dàochún, Zhōnghé jí, TCC2 p.441*

While some *guǎyù* pursue rigorous austerities, they do not necessarily weaken their bodies since extreme physical austerity may result in failure. Nevertheless, in some cases, a strong emphasis on spiritual perfection has led to some neglect of the body. Most Daoist *guǎyù,* however, sought to improve their physical condition in order to achieve both long life and spiritual perfection – the highest goal being the attainment of spiritual immortality and ascent to divine realms. Twelfth-century Daoist master Mǎ Yù (*aka.* Dānyáng) fondly recalls the simple lifestyle of his own master:

> The master resided in a hut *(huándǔ)* furnished only with a desk, a long couch, a brush, an ink tablet, and a sheepskin. It was empty, without any extraneous objects. In the early morning he ate one small bowl of rice gruel and at noon ate one large bowl of noodles. Beyond this, never did fruits or spicy vegetables go through his mouth.
>
> *Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù 4a, TPEQ p.40*

Negative tendencies, such as preoccupation, fear, scheming and contriving the outcome of events, diminish spiritual awareness and result in unnatural mental states. A Daoist, on the other hand, aims to have a natural response to the events of life by keeping the mind empty of negative thoughts, so that it may remain in a state of open receptivity to realization of the *Dào:*

Reveal your simple self *(sù)*
embrace your original nature *(pǔ),*
check your selfishness *(sī),*
curtail your desires *(yù).*

*Lǎozǐ, Dàodé jīng 19; cf. WLT p.120*

Here, *pǔ* (plain, simple) is used metaphorically to represent original nature; the root meaning of the pictogram being plain wood, uncut and unadorned.

It is generally believed that the simple existence of a poor man is more conducive to the spiritual life than that of a wealthy person, who is typically entangled in a complex existence:

> A person of the *Dào (dàorén)* must not dislike being poor *(pín).* Poverty *(pín)* is the foundation of nurturing life. If hungry, eat one bowl of rice gruel. If you become sleepy, spread out a grass mat. Pass the days and nights in tattered garments. Such is truly the lifestyle of a person of the *Dào (dàorén).* Therefore you must understand that the single matter of purity and clarity *(qīng jìng)* cannot be acquired by the wealthy.
>
> *Mǎ Yù, Dānyáng zhēnrén yǔlù 10b–11a, TPEQ pp.40–41*

There are many Daoist paragons of asceticism. In explaining why his school *(Quánzhēn)* laid such a great emphasis on maintaining an ascetic lifestyle, thirteenth-century Daoist master Liú Chǔxuán points to outstanding sagely figures from each of the *Sānjiǎo* (Three Teachings) who shared the common ideal of an austere life:

> The Confucian Yán Huí was pure and poor *(pín)* and owned only a rice bucket *(dān)* and a drinking gourd *(piáo).* The Buddhist Shìjiā begged for food and took one meal per day by begging from seven different households. The Daoist Lǚ Chúnyáng was non-active. He lived like a quail (had no permanent home) and ate like a baby bird (ate only what was given to him, without complaint).
>
> *Liú Chǔxuán, Chángshēng yǔlù 3b; cf. TPEQ p.43*

Here, Yán Huí was the favourite disciple of Kǒngfūzǐ (Confucius); Shìjiā is the short form of Shìjiāmóuní, the Chinese rendering of Shākyamuni (S. Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha); and Lǚ Chúnyáng is a sobriquet of Lǚ Dòngbīn, the informal leader of the *bāxiān* (eight immortals).

See also: **shānlín zhī shì**, **yǐnshì**.

**guide** Spiritually, God, the Word or *Logos,* the *Nous* (divine Mind or Intelligence), the Holy Spirit, a spirit, an angel, Christ, a spiritual master or director, a book, the inner light, love, virtue, conscience, the mind, reason, *etc.* Various Greek terms are translated as 'guide', including *hēgemōn, hodēgos, kubernētēs,* and *mystagōgos.*

In the quest for spiritual enlightenment and spiritual experience, human beings have sought many guides, not necessarily exclusive of each other. The term therefore appears in many contexts. In the Hebrew Bible, God is petitioned as guide and helper. As the psalmist writes:

You are the God of my strength:
  why have You abandoned me?
Why must I go about in mourning,
  because of the oppression of the enemy?

Send out Your light and Your Truth,
  let them guide me;
Let them lead me to Your holy mountain,
  to the place where You abide.

*Psalms 43:2–3; cf. KJV*

And:

Let dawn bring proof of Your love
  for one who relies on You;
Let it show the right road
  to one who lifts up his soul to You.

*Yahweh,* rescue me from my enemies,
  I have fled to You for shelter;
Teach me to obey You, since You are my God;
May Your good Spirit guide me on to level ground.

*Psalms 143:8–10, JB*

Isaiah promises that God is always the guide of those who live as decent human beings:

If you do away with the yoke,
  the clenched fist, the wicked word;
If you give your bread to the hungry,
  and relief to the oppressed,
  your light will rise in the darkness,
  and your shadows become like noon.
*Yahweh* will always guide you,
  giving you relief in desert places.
He will give strength to your bones,
  and you shall be like a watered garden,
  like a spring of water
  whose waters never run dry.

*Isaiah 58:9–11, JB*

Similarly, in one of the books of attributed to Ezra the Scribe:

> Neither be afraid nor doubt; for God is your guide. "You who keep My commandments and precepts," says the Lord God, "let not your sins pull you down, or your sins overcome you."
>
> *4 Ezra 16:75–76; cf. KJV, RSV*

For Philo Judaeus, the first-century Hellenized Jew of Alexandria, the primary "guide of the whole soul" is *Nous,*[1] also called the divine Word or *Logos,* "chosen as . . . patron and controlling guide *(kubernētēs)*"[2] by the soul in search of God. As he also says, "Until a man is made perfect, he uses the divine *Logos* as the guide of his path."[3] Plutarch also speaks of the *"Logos* as our mystic guide *(mystagōgos)".*[4]

In Christianity, Christ, as the incarnated Word or *Logos,* is likewise regarded as the soul's guide. Clement of Alexandria calls him "the heavenly guide *(hēgemōn),* the Word *(Logos)*",[5] also adding, "Our instructor *(paedagōgos)* is the holy God, Jesus, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity."[6] In the apocryphal texts, Jesus is again the guide:

> Be unto them a guide in the land of error;
> Be unto them a physician in the land of sickness.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 156; cf. AAA pp.288–89, ANT pp.432–33*

Among the Manichaeans, both Jesus and third-century Mānī were regarded as spiritual guides of equal stature, along with Buddha, Zarathushtra, and others:

> When the soul is unaware of the knowledge it has gained through ten thousand births, . . . (and is unaware of) the blessing of recognizing the timeless, eternal and untainted Goodness, then it needs a guide to show it the way to redemption from evil (and to blessedness of the soul), and to the eternal untainted and unceasing Goodness.
>
> *Manichaean Texts, MM2 p.297ff., RMP ad; cf. GSR p.251*

In a passage replete with Buddhist terminology, a text in praise of Mānī from Chinese Turkestan, Mānī is depicted as the guide and liberator from birth and death. The "four *buddhas*" who came before Mānī (in the view of the poet) are probably the historical Buddha, Zarathushtra, Jesus, and one other (possibly Lǎozǐ):

> After the four *buddhas,* you descended,
> and attained truly incomparable buddhahood.
> You redeemed myriads of living beings,
> and saved them from this dark hell.
> You purged them of masterly cunning and deception,
> and caused them to do good deeds to others.

You became a guide and leader for those who had gone astray,
you saved them from the claws of the evildoing *Māra.*
You rescued those who had been wicked,
you healed those who had been blind.
You caused them to do honourable deeds,
you showed them the right path to the land of the gods.
You were born as the hope and refuge of the world.

*Manichaean Hymns, TTT3 p.183ff., MTP p.168ff.; cf. GSR pp.281–82*

Many other Manichaean psalms refer to the saviour. Sometimes the saviour is Mānī, sometimes Jesus, sometimes all saviours in general and none in particular. He is referred to by a variety of epithets:

Come to me, my kinsman, the light, my guide....
My soul, bear up: you have your saviour:
your defence is Christ, for he will receive you into his kingdom.

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLVI; cf. MPB p.54*

The primal man, our helmsman,... our primal guide,
you are our shepherd who feeds us.

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXIV; cf. MPB p.13*

Praise be to you, O shining one, Mānī our guide,
root of enlightenment, branch of Life,
mighty Tree that is all healing.

*Manichaean Text, in KF pp.333, 307 (n.236);*
*cf. FN2 p.790, in MEM p.155, MF pp.65, 96*

The common theme running through all these epithets is of the guide, the protector, and the redeemer:

He is my great mediator,
and my protection and my true refuge.
He is the guide who leads me away from all sins,
and the redeemer.
He is the saviour who leads me out of trouble.

*Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.318ff., RMP be; cf. GSR pp.50–51, ML p.80*

The guide and saviour is also the one who meets the soul in his spiritual form at the time of death:

Now I call to you: saviour, come to me in my hour of need:...
this is the moment of my death: I have need of you.

In a sweet voice, he answered me saying,
"O blessed and righteous man, come forth, be not afraid.
I am your guide in every place."
When I heard the cry of my saviour,
a power clothed all my limbs;
Their bitter walls I destroyed,
their doors I broke down, I ran to my judge.
The garland of glory he set upon my head,
the prize of victory he set in my hand,
he clothed me in the robe of light,
he exalted me over all my enemies.
I rejoice as I ascend to my father,
with whom I have conquered in the land of darkness;
O my great king, ferry me to the city of the gods, the angels.

*Manichaean Psalm Book CCXLIII; cf. MPB p.50*

The same theme is present in the Hermetic literature. The spiritual guide is the one who leads the soul out of the illusion and spiritual ignorance of this world:

> The harm that comes from ignorance *(agnōsis,* absence of *gnōsis)* is flooding the entire earth, overwhelming the soul along with the body that encloses it, preventing it from finding refuge in the harbours of salvation.
>
> Do not, then, be swept away by the main current, but availing yourself of the countercurrent, you who can, make for salvation's port, and harbouring there, look for a guide to take you by the hand, and lead you through the gates of *gnōsis,* where clear light shines, pure from all darkness; where not a single soul is intoxicated, but all are sober, fixing their eyes on that Being who wills to be seen – but spiritually, for that Being cannot be heard or told or seen by eyes, only by mind and spirit.
>
> *Corpus Hermeticum VII:1–2; cf. GS p.462, TGH2 pp.120–21*

Many Christians and others have found great peace and solace in the sense that the Divine is with them at all times, guiding their lives in all its smallest details, if only they can abandon themselves to Him. It is a universal feeling that transcends religious distinctions. The eighteenth-century Jesuit Jean-Pierre de Caussade seems to have lived his life in this manner, taking only God as His guide. To become completely resigned to the divine will, he writes, is a leap of faith, a leap into the unknown:

> We are driven blindly along a path we have never seen or heard of, unable to venture along any other. Divine action never follows the

> same course, it always traces out fresh paths. Those whom it leads never know where they are going; they will not find the way through books or by their own searching. Divine action forever opens the way which they are compelled to take.
>
> When one is led by a guide who takes one through unknown country by night, across ground without any clearly defined paths, going wherever he fancies without asking advice or disclosing his intentions, what is there but to surrender to him? What is the use of looking to see where one is, asking passers-by, or consulting the map and other travellers? All this would defeat the intention and whim, so to speak, of our guide, who demands complete confidence and wishes to arouse anxiety and mistrust in us in order that we should totally depend on him. If we were certain that he was guiding us in the right direction, this would be neither faith nor surrender.
>
> *J.-P. de Caussade, Sacrament of the Present Moment 11, SPM pp.121–22*

The unknown author of the *Cloud of Unknowing,* talking of guidance on the inner life, speaks of placing reliance upon the inward feelings of love that arise in the heart, taking them as a certain guide:

> You may confidently rely on this gentle stirring of love in your heart, and follow wherever it leads you; for it is your sure guide in this life, and will bring you to bliss in the next.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 49; cf. CU p.100, CUEU p.197*

Elsewhere, the same author describes the same feeling as "God's grace", leading the soul to a "naked awareness" of its own being:

> Relying on God's grace to lead and guide you, you will come to this deep experience of his love by following the path I have set before you in these pages. It demands that you always and ever strive toward the naked awareness of your self, and continually offer your being to God as your most precious gift.
>
> *Book of Privy Counselling 23, CU p.175*

Then, when the soul has become perfect, it is lifted up to union with the Divine, guided once again by His grace:

> When you have been made perfect within and without, you will go forward in trust. God's grace will be your foundation and guide on the spiritual way, lovingly lifting up your being – naked and blind as it is – to God's blessed Being.
>
> *Cloud of Unknowing 5, CUCW p.173*

The author is speaking of the soul's 'journey' in inner darkness, during inner prayer. In this condition, the soul is essentially blind, for it cannot see, spiritually, where it is going. It must therefore rely upon the Divine for grace and guidance. John of the Cross says very much the same:

> When the soul is making most progress, it is travelling in darkness, knowing nothing. Wherefore, since God, as we have said, is the master and guide of this blind soul, it may well and truly rejoice, once it has learned to understand this, and say that it journeys "in darkness and secure."
>
> *John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul 2:16.8; cf. CWJC1 p.425*

And again:

> Although as the soul journeys, it is supported by no particular interior light of understanding, nor by any exterior guide, . . . yet its love alone, which burns at this time and makes its heart long for the Beloved, is that which now moves and guides it, and makes it soar upward to its God along the road of solitude, without its knowing how or in what manner.
>
> *John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul 2:25.4; cf. CWJC1 pp.456–57*

De Caussade was spiritual director or guide to the Jesuit retreat house in Nancy, France, where he took on the spiritual direction of the Nuns of the Visitation. In fact, it is his notes of addresses to these nuns that comprise his well-known book. Likewise, John of the Cross and the unknown author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* acted as spiritual directors or guides within the Catholic fold. They are all part of an established Christian tradition, especially of Catholic and Orthodox monasticism, that has long deemed a spiritual guide or director as a necessity. Often, the guide was also the confessor. But, as these and others have pointed out, the true guide is one who points the way to the true divine guide, within. But to come into contact with that inner guide, an outer guide is deemed essential. As John of the Cross says:

> He that desires to be alone, without the support of a master and guide, will be like the tree that is alone in the field and has no owner. However much fruit it bears, passers-by will pluck it all, and it will not mature.
>
> *John of the Cross, Maxims (Andujar) 5, CWJC3 p.219*

François de Sales also recommends finding a guide. Part of the reason he gives for this is the humbling of the ego in obedience to someone else:

> If you wish to walk the path of devotion, Philothea, . . . find someone to guide you. It is the most important advice I can offer you. Blessed John

> of Ávila tells us that this humble obedience, so much recommended and practised by the saints, is the surest way to find the will of God.
>
> *François de Sales, Devout Life 1:4, IDL p.15*

He advocates placing complete trust in the guide:

> Since it is so very important . . . that you travel with a good guide, implore God to send you one after His own heart; and be sure that He who sent an angel from heaven to guide Tobias will send someone good and faithful to guide you; one whom in fact, when you have found him, you should look on as an angel, not merely as a man.
>
> Do not place your trust in him as though he were no more than man, nor in his merely human knowledge, but trust God, who will speak to you and grant graces through him. God will put into his heart and on his lips whatever is necessary for your happiness. Listen to him, then, as though he were an angel from heaven sent to guide you there.
>
> Open your heart to him truthfully and sincerely, tell him everything good and bad, hide nothing and pretend nothing; in this way the good will be examined and made more sure and the bad corrected and remedied; you will be comforted and strengthened in time of trouble, moderated and restrained in time of prosperity.
>
> *François de Sales, Devout Life 1:4, IDL pp.16–17*

François de Sales is presuming the availability of a suitably qualified guide. John of the Cross, however, cautions that to find a suitable guide is not easy, and requires the exercise of discrimination:

> It is of great importance for the soul that desires to make progress in recollection and perfection to consider in whose hands it is placing itself; for as is the master, so will be the disciple, and as is the father, so will be the son. And let it be noted there is hardly anyone who in all respects will guide the soul perfectly along the highest stretch of the road, or even along the intermediate stretches, for it is needful that such a guide should be experienced as well as wise and discreet. The fundamental requirement of a guide in spiritual things is knowledge and discretion; yet, if a guide have no experience of the nature of pure and true spirituality, he will be unable to direct the soul therein, when God permits it to attain so far, nor will he even understand it.
>
> In this way many spiritual masters do much harm to many souls, for not themselves understanding the ways and properties of the spirit, they commonly cause souls to lose the unction of these delicate ointments, wherewith the Holy Spirit gradually anoints and prepares them for Himself, and instruct them by other and lower means which they

> have used and of which they have read here and there, and which are unsuitable save for beginners. They themselves know no more than how to deal with these (beginners) – please God they may know even so much! – and refuse to allow souls to go beyond these rudimentary acts of meditation and imagination, even though God is seeking to lead them farther, so that they may never exceed or depart from their natural capacity, whereby a soul can achieve very little.
>
> *John of the Cross, Living Flame of Love 3:30–31, CWJC3 p.159*

Finding a suitable guide, who has understanding and experience of interior prayer, may not always be easy, since the wayfarer may be more spiritually advanced than the guide. Teresa of Ávila, a contemporary of John of the Cross, also had great difficulty finding a suitable confessor and guide. Speaking of her early life, she writes that an

> uncle of mine . . . gave me a book called *Third Alphabet* which treats of the prayer of recollection.[7] During this first year I had been reading good books (I no longer wanted to read any others, for I now realized what harm they had done me), but I did not know how to practise prayer, or how to recollect myself, and so I was delighted with the book and determined to follow that way of prayer with all my might. As by now the Lord had granted me the gift of tears, and I liked reading, I began to spend periods in solitude, to go frequently to confession and to start upon the way of prayer with this book for my guide. For I found no other guide (no confessor, I mean) who understood me, though I sought one for fully twenty years subsequently to the time I am speaking of. This did me great harm, as I had frequent relapses, and might have been completely lost; a guide would at least have helped me to escape when I found myself running the risk of offending God.
>
> *Teresa of Ávila, Life 4, CWTA1 p.23*

One of the fourteenth-century group of Rhineland mystics, and anonymous author of the *Book of the Poor in Spirit,* also indicates that although a guide is a great help, he can also be misled, and the best guidance will always be from God. Speaking of the inner light as a guide, he writes:

> Some might protest that this light is doubtful, and men are frequently deceived, and proceed to regard a natural or devilish light as divine; and that it is better therefore that one should depend on another who has more light. Yes, it is well for a person who is in doubt to permit himself to be led so that he may be shown what is best for him to do. He should, however, not just stop at external teaching, rather he should carry it into the light of his heart, and see what he finds good there,

> and follow that. Above all, he should follow what he learns there. Nevertheless, he should always compare his findings with the witness of Holy Scripture and the general teachings of the church. In this way, he will never go wrong.
>
> Nor is it necessary that he should always accept what his guide says and directs, rather he must accept what God commands of him within. This he should follow above all and through it arrive at true abandonment. He cannot arrive at this by the advice of men only. Man can only advise what is human and this alone does not bring about perfection. And he who follows God's counsels attains to the highest perfection. As David said: "Blessed is the man whom You shall instruct, O Lord."[8]
>
> There are some who will say that the teaching of a truly wise man is from God, and hence it should be followed. Yes, the teaching of a truly wise man is from God, but it is still intermediary, and as long as one remains in this, he is not immediately touched by God. To be so touched, he should follow only God, not a fellow creature. God reveals a light by which he cannot go wrong. God absorbs his attention within Himself, so that he may forget creatures. That is why the philosopher of nature (Aristotle) said: "He who is touched by the First Cause must follow no human counsel, but Him who is above all human counsel."[9]
>
> *Book of the Poor in Spirit 2:3.4; cf. BPS pp.154–55*

Coming from a non-Catholic tradition, the twentieth-century Quaker Thomas Kelly suggests a somewhat similar viewpoint. He writes of how the "Inward Light", which he also describes as the divine presence and the "Living Christ within us", becomes the ever-present guide of the soul. The Quakers regard much of the formality and many of the rituals of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches as encumbrances, deflecting the soul from its primary focus upon the presence of God within:

> What is here urged are internal practices and habits of the mind. What is here urged are secret habits of unceasing orientation of the deeps of our being about the Inward Light; ways of conducting our inward life so that we are perpetually bowed in worship, while we are also very busy in the world of daily affairs. What is here urged are inward practices of the mind at deepest levels, letting it swing like the needle, to the polestar of the soul. And, like the needle, the Inward Light becomes the truest guide of life, showing us new and unsuspected defects in ourselves and our fellows, showing us new and unsuspected possibilities in the power and life of goodwill among men. But, more deeply, He who is within us urges, by secret persuasion, to such an amazing Inward Life with Him, so that, firmly cleaving to Him, we

> always look out upon all the world through the sheen of the Inward Light, and react toward men spontaneously and joyously from this Inward Centre. Yield yourself to Him who is a far better teacher than these outward words, and you will have found the Instructor Himself, of whom these words are a faint and broken echo.
>
> *Thomas Kelly, Testament of Devotion, TDK pp.5–6*

Even more than Catholicism, the traditions of Eastern Christianity have laid great importance on the guide or *staretz.* Gregory of Sinai is forthright:

> If someone's experience of praying derives from hearsay or reading, he will lose his way, for he lacks a guide.
>
> *Gregory of Sinai, Prayer 5, Philokalia, PCT4 p.279*

Symeon the New Theologian observes that a spiritual guide requires far greater and more subtle skill that a physician of the body:

> If you do not enter the way of renunciation in the right spirit – if, that is to say, from the start you refuse to accept a teacher and guide but, regarding yourself as an adept, rely on your own judgment – you will make a mockery of the religious life, and in turn will be mocked by what happens to you.
>
> Just as you cannot know exactly the causes and cures of bodily afflictions without great medical experience and skill, so you cannot know those of psychic (mental and spiritual) afflictions without great spiritual training and practice. The diagnosis of bodily illnesses is a tricky business, and only a few are truly versed in it; but the diagnosis of psychic illnesses is far more tricky. The soul is superior to the body, and correspondingly its afflictions are greater and harder to understand than those of the body, which is visible to all.
>
> *Symeon the New Theologian, Inner Nature of Things 10–11, Philokalia, PCT4 p.110*

Symeon the New Theologian discusses the matter at considerable length. Firstly, he says, seek a good and holy master, and then test him to see if he lives according to scripture, for their are many "deceivers":

> If you want to renounce the world and to be instructed in life according to the gospels, do not place yourself in the hands of an inexperienced master or one subject to the passions; for then you will be taught, not the ways of the gospels, but those of the devil. Good masters impart good teaching, but the evil teach evil. Bad seed produces rotten fruit.
>
> Implore God with prayers and tears to send you a guide who is dispassionate and holy. But you yourself should also study the divine

> writings – especially the works of the fathers that deal with the practice of the virtues – so that you can compare the teachings of your master with them; for thus you will see and observe them as in a mirror. Take to heart and keep in mind those of his teachings that agree with the divine writings, but separate out and reject those that are false and incongruent. Otherwise you will be led astray. For in these days there are all too many deceivers and false prophets. A blind person who undertakes to guide others is a deceiver, plunging those who follow him into the pit of destruction. As the Lord said: "If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit."[10]
>
> *Symeon the New Theologian, Practical Texts 32–34, Philokalia, PCT4 pp.30–31*

In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, obedience to the monastic rule, to one's confessor, and to one's spiritual guide are deemed of primary importance. So much so that Symeon continues:

> He who looks upon his teacher and guide as if he were God cannot call him into question. If he thinks and says that he can, he should know that he deceives himself, being ignorant of the attitude of holy men towards God.
>
> If you believe that your life and death are in the hands of your spiritual guide, you will never contradict him. Ignorance of this engenders contentiousness, and this brings about spiritual and eternal death.
>
> *Symeon the New Theologian, Practical Texts 38–39, Philokalia, PCT4 p.31*

He therefore advises that a monk should never argue with his guide:

> Before a monk has entered this court and has revealed what he has in his heart, he may perhaps argue with his spiritual guide, either out of ignorance or because he thinks he can keep things about himself hidden. But after he has revealed and sincerely confessed his thoughts, he cannot argue with the man who, after God, will be his judge and master until death.
>
> For when a monk has once entered this court and laid bare the secrets of his heart, he will know from the start – if he has any understanding at all – that he deserves a thousand deaths. He will believe that through humility and obedience he can be saved from all punishment and chastisement, if indeed he has truly grasped the nature of this mystery.
>
> If you keep these things indelibly in mind, your heart will never rebel when you are disciplined or admonished or criticized. But whoever falls victim to the evils of contentiousness and disbelief with

> respect to his spiritual father and teacher is, while yet living, dragged down pitifully into the depths of *Hadēs*.
>
> *Symeon the New Theologian, Practical Texts 40–42, Philokalia, PCT4 p.32*

Staretz Silouan of Mount Athos speaks emphatically about the significance of obedience:

> The *staretz* (Silouan) attributed the utmost importance to the question of obedience, not only for monks and Christians individually, but in the life of the whole 'body of the church'. Inner obedience to abbot and spiritual father, he looked upon as a sacrament of the church and a gift of grace. He would accept his confessor's first words, his first intimation, and carry the conversation no further. This is the wisdom and mystery of true obedience, the purpose of which is to know and fulfil God's will, and not man's.
>
> Many people make the mistake of looking upon a spiritual guide as just an ordinary man like themselves, having like failings. (They think they must 'explain all the circumstances to him, otherwise he won't understand'. He may easily 'make a mistake' and must, therefore, be 'put on the right track'.) But those who contradict and correct their spiritual father place themselves above him and are no longer disciples. True, nobody is perfect, and there is no man who would venture to teach like Christ, 'as one having authority', for the teaching is 'not of man' and 'not after man'.
>
> *Archimandrite Sophrony, Monk of Mount Athos, MMA pp.53–54*

There are a few, says Nikiphoros, who develop spiritual understanding without a guide, but the normal rule is to search diligently for a suitable guide:

> Most, if not all, of those who attain this greatest of gifts do so chiefly through being taught. To be sure, a few without being taught receive it directly from God, through the ardour of their endeavour and the fervour of their faith; but what is rare does not constitute the norm. That is why we should search for an unerring guide, so that under his instruction we may learn how to deal with the shortcomings and exaggerations suggested to us by the devil whenever we deviate left or right from the axis of attentiveness. Since such a guide will himself have been tested through what he has suffered, he will be able to make these things clear to us, and will unambiguously disclose the spiritual path to us, so that we can follow it easily. If you have no such guide you must diligently search for one.

> If, however, no guide is to be found, you must renounce worldly attachments, call on God with a contrite spirit and with tears, and do what I tell you.
>
> *Nikiphoros, On Watchfulness, Philokalia, PCT4 p.205*

See also: **spiritual director**, **staretz**.

1. Philo Judaeus, *On the Creation of the World* 8, *TGH1* p.232.
2. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 12, *PCW4* pp.168–69.
3. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 31; *cf. PCW4* pp.232–33.
4. Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* (68) 378b; *cf. PMB5* pp.156–57, *TGH1* p.348; *cf. On Isis and Osiris* (49) 371a.
5. Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 1:1, *WCA1* p.113.
6. Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* 1:7, *WCA1* p.151.
7. Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet.*
8. *Psalms* 94:12.
9. An untraced quotation, perhaps the author's paraphrase or from memory.
10. *Matthew* 15:14.

**guóshī** (C), **kokushi** (J) *Lit.* nation *(guó)* teacher *(shī);* teacher of the nation, national teacher, imperial teacher; a supervisor of monks and nuns in a particular province during the Japanese *Nara* period (710–794); an honorific bestowed by the emperor to esteemed East Asian Buddhist monks, sometimes posthumously, generally accompanied by a purple robe and a certificate; added as a suffix to the individual's name and used as a form of address:

> The practice is said to have originated in India. The first monk to receive the honour in China was Fǎcháng in 550. In China, the masters designated as *guóshī* usually served in some capacity as teachers of the ruling family at court.
>
> In Japan, the term was first used during the *Nara* period for a monastic officer responsible for overseeing the Buddhist monks and nuns in a given province. Emperor Hanazono (1297–1348) first bestowed the posthumous title *kokushi* on *Zen* master Enni Ben'en (1202–1280) in 1312. At that time, the honour was often granted in Japan as a posthumous tribute for outstanding figures, although there are examples of monks receiving the title during their lifetime.
>
> In *Zen* texts, the title is sometimes used in reference to Nányáng Huìzhōng, the first *Zen* master to receive the honour in China. According to the tradition, Nányáng Huìzhōng was summoned to court by the emperor three times before he finally accepted the invitation.

> When he did finally go to court, the emperor was so highly impressed by him that he bestowed on him the title National Teacher.
>
> *"Kokushi," Illustrated Encyclopedia of Zen Buddhism, IEZB pp.194–95*

Some of the many well-known figures who received the title include: in China, Chéngguān (738–839), the fourth patriarch of the *Huáyán* (S. *Avataṃsaka,* J. *Hwaeom*) school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism; in Japan, Chū Kokushi (*d.*775), the first Japanese monk to receive the honour; Gyōnen Kokushi (1240–1321), a learned *Kegon* (C. *Huáyán*) monk, renowned for his knowledge of the *Vinaya* (S. monastic code); and Musō Kokushi (1275–1351), a *Rinzai Zen* monk who received the honour (posthumously in some cases) from several successive imperial courts and from seven emperors; in Korea, Uisang (625–702), whose most well-known work, the brief *Hwaeom Ilseung Beopgye-do* ('Diagram of the *Avataṃsaka* One-Vehicle Realm of Reality'), was presented to Zhìyǎn (602–668), the second patriarch of the *Huáyán* school, during Uisang's stay in China, and remains a classic exposition of *Hwaeom* teachings.

**gǔrén**, **gǔzhīrén** (C) *Lit.* ancient *(gǔ)* people *(rén)* + *zhī* (possessive particle); men of old; the ancients; past sages, mystics and teachers; older people or elders, who are generally acknowledged to have gained experience and wisdom.

According to Daoist tradition, people of ancient times lived close to the *Dào.* The world at that time is believed to have been an altogether simpler, less complicated place with very little distraction from a life of purity and simplicity. But as people became more and more materialistic in behaviour and outlook, they became progressively more distant from all things spiritual, and increasingly unaware of the *Dào:*

> Once greed *(tān)* and selfness *(sī)* dominate a man's mind, his previously steel-like nature will become soft and weak *(róu);* his intelligence will become blocked and dulled; his benevolent nature (*ēn,* grace, kindness) will become (filled with) vices *(cǎn);* his pure spirit will become muddied *(wū);* and the virtue *(rénpǐn)* he has accumulated over a lifetime will become dissipated. That is why the ancients *(gǔrén)* regarded "Be not covetous" as a precious precept for self-improvement. It was thus that they managed to overcome greed for material things, and enjoyed peace and security throughout their lives.
>
> *Hóng Zìchéng, Càigēntán 78, TRW p.78*

Therefore, in support of their teachings, Daoists have drawn attention to the practices and general behaviour of the *gǔrén,* because they were understood to have been blessed with happiness and peace of mind:

> The ancients' *(gǔrén)* method of transcending *(chū)* the world *(shì),* refining away *(liàn)* the dregs of darkness *(yīn)* to restore pure light *(qián),* is just a matter of dissolving the lower soul *(pò)* and making the higher soul *(hún)* whole.
>
> *Jīnhuá zōngzhǐ 2, SGFC p.15*

Here, "*qián* (pure light)", representing heaven and the male principle *(yáng),* is used symbolically as a contrast to *yīn* (darkness).

Alluding to the meditation technique that he propounded, fourth-century Daoist scholar Gě Hóng (*aka.* Bàopǔzǐ, 'Master who Embraces Simplicity') says that visualization of the original unity and primordial oneness of all ("the True One") was the only way to attain the state of spiritual immortality, because it cuts off evil influences and preserves the body; according to him, this was the reason why the ancients *(gǔrén)* valued the *Dào* above all else:

> For the preservation *(shǒu)* of the body and the expulsion of evil *(è),* there is only the True One *(Zhēnyī).* For this reason, the ancients *(gǔrén)* valued It *(Dào)* in particular.
>
> *Gě Hóng, Bàopǔzǐ nèipiān 18:2a–b, TEAK p.200*

Seventeenth-century Daoist mystic and philosopher Hóng Zìchéng offers advice on keeping the mind free from impurities in order to return to a pure and simple way of life, and to develop human qualities, even while living in modern times. It is better to keep the mind elevated by listening to uplifting topics, than to expose it to negativity and allow it to run out into the world:

> It is better to listen to the songs of woodcutters and herdsmen than to pay attention to street-corner gossip. It is better to chat about the fine words and deeds of the ancients *(gǔrén)* than to gossip about the decadence and failings of the moderns *(jīnrén).*
>
> *Hóng Zìchéng, Càigēntán 157, TRW p.157*

The *gǔrén* are often referred to in Daoist scriptures and in older literature generally, where they are used to highlight some aspect of human or spiritual wisdom, or to validate some particular advice or instruction:

> Zhuāngzǐ said, "To know the *Dào* is easy.… To know it and not to speak of it is the way to attain to the heavenly; to know and to speak of it, is the way to remain a human. The ancients *(gǔzhīrén)* pursued the heavenly, and not the human."
>
> *Zhuāngzǐ 32; cf. TT2 pp.205–6*

The conduct and practices of the *gǔrén* are a source of guidance not only regarding higher spiritual matters, but also concerning moral and virtuous behaviour, for they have developed the best of human qualities. Hóng Zìchéng discusses the importance of having a compassionate heart towards all living creatures – validating this advice by noting that this was a positive trait of the *gǔrén:*

> An old saying goes, "Leave scraps of food out so that the mice don't starve, and blow out the candle so that the poor moths don't burn to death." This merciful attitude of the ancients *(gǔrén)* is what enables mankind (*jīnrén,* people of today) to propagate and flourish. Without such a kind heart, a man is no more than a soulless empty shell (*tǔmù xínghái,* a framework of earth and wood).
>
> *Hóng Zìchéng, Càigēntán 173, TRW p.173*

**gurmukh** (Pu) *Lit.* face *(mukh)* to master *(guru);* one whose face *(mukh)* is turned in devotion towards the *guru* or master; one who has completely surrendered himself to the *guru* or the Lord's will; sometimes used for a master or *guru* who is a perfect example of devotion to his own master and of surrender to the divine will; contrasted with *manmukh,* one whose face is towards the mind *(man),* a worldly person.

In the *Ādi Granth,* the suffix 'i' is sometimes added to *gurmukh,* making the variant *gurmukhi. Gurmukhi* means 'through the *guru*', and hence 'through the *guru'*s teaching', 'through the *guru'*s instruction' or 'through the *guru'*s guidance'. Sometimes, *gurmukhi* is also used exclusively for the *guru:*

> The *gurmukh (gurmukhi)* saves millions of people,
> blessing them with even a particle of the Name *(Nām).*
>
> *Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 608, AGK*

See also: **gurmukh** (▸4).

**guru** (S/H), **gurū**, **gur** (Pu) *Lit.* heavy, weighty; venerable, respectable; a venerable or respected person; a teacher; one who is 'heavy' with knowledge; one whose opinions are weighty; in a spiritual context, a spiritual teacher, guide, or master; one who is 'heavy' with spiritual wisdom; a teacher of any of the paths of *yoga;* also, one who gives religious instruction in Vedic rituals and the meaning of Indian scriptures; a spiritual preceptor who gives an initiatory *mantra;* also, in recent times, especially in the West, a person knowledgable in some particular field, such as a 'marketing *guru*'. In the *Ādi Granth,* the holy book of the Sikh tradition, the term used is generally *gur,* sometimes

*gurū,* though for the sake of simplicity, it is commonly rendered by the more familiar *'guru'*.

Various traditional but doubtful etymologies are prevalent. *Guru* is said to be derived from *gu* ('darkness') and *ru* ('removal'). Sometimes, *ru* is said to represent 'light'. The *guru* is therefore said to be the one who dispels or removes the inner darkness and bestows inner light. According to the *Ashṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini (*c.*C6th–4th BCE), a renowned Sanskrit grammarian, *gu* indicates concealment *(saṃvaraṇa)* and *ru* its destruction *(hiṃsana).*[1]

Employing these kinds of derived meaning to extol the virtues of the *guru,* the *Guru Gītā* says:

> The syllable *gu* represents darkness,
> the syllable *ru* signifies radiant light;
> There is no doubt that the *guru* is *Brahman:*
> with his light, he dispels the darkness.
>
> The syllable *gu* represents the disease of birth and death *(bhava-roga),*
> the syllable *ru* signifies its destroyer.
> Because of his power to destroy
> the disease of birth and death *(bhava-roga),*
> the teacher is known by the significant name of *guru.*
>
> The syllable *gu* indicates that he is above the three *guṇas* (attributes),
> the syllable *ru* denotes that he is beyond forms.
> Because he is free from the *guṇas* and from form, he is called the *guru.*
>
> The first syllable *gu* manifests *māyā* (illusion) and the *guṇas,*
> the syllable *ru* is *Parabrahman* (beyond *Brahman*),
> which removes both *māyā* and delusions,
> such as "I am the body," "I am the mind," and so forth.
>
> The state of the *guru* is great and sublime,
> it is very difficult for even gods *(devas)* to attain.
> The Reality of the *guru (guru Tattva)* is supreme,
> there is nothing greater than the *guru:*
> One should worship his *guru* and dedicate himself –
> body, mind and soul – to the *guru.*...
>
> Always worship the *guru* in thought, word and deed,
> with full prostrations, laying the whole body prone before the *guru.*...
> Worship the *guru,* for there is none greater than the *guru.*...
>
> The *guru* is *Brahmā,* the *guru* is *Vishṇu,*
> the *guru* is the divine *Maheshwara (Shiva).*

> Truly, the *guru* alone is verily the perceptible, real, supreme *Brahman* –
> therefore, offer prostrations before him. . . .
>
> There is no greater Truth than the *guru,*
> no greater penance than the *guru,*
> no knowledge greater than the *guru.*
> Therefore, do I ever pay homage to that *guru.* . . .
>
> When *Shiva* (God) is angry, the *guru* can save you.
> If the *guru* is angry, nobody can save you.
> Therefore, having found the *kula guru* (family *guru*),
> take refuge in him.
>
> *Skanda Purāṇa, Guru Gītā 44–49, 51, 53, 58, 77, 88;*
> *cf. SGGN pp.17–20, 23, 31, 36*

The *Advaya-Tāraka Upanishad* echoes the *Guru Gītā:*

> The syllable *gu* signifies darkness, the syllable *ru,* dispeller. By reason of his power to dispel darkness, he is called the *guru.* The *guru* alone is the transcendent *Brahman;* the *guru* alone is the supreme way; the *guru* alone is the supreme knowledge; and the *guru* alone is the supreme refuge. Because he teaches That (the supreme Reality), the *guru* is greater than all else.
>
> *Advaya-Tāraka Upanishad 16, 17, 18; cf. YU p.8*

Scholars, looking more carefully at the origins of the word, regard such 'derivations' as fanciful, phonetic etymology, founded on the sound of the word rather than its actual origin. Such derivations express a viewpoint rather than discover the actual derivation. *'Guru'* as a Sanskrit adjective, say the scholars, means heavy or weighty. As a noun, it implies someone of substance – hence, someone worthy of respect and veneration, a teacher. It is cognate with the Latin *gravis* (heavy, weighty, serious) and the Greek *barus* (heavy), all three from the same proto-Indo-European root.

The use of *guru* as a general word for teacher is evident in the *Mahābhārata*[2] and the *Bhagavad Gītā,* where both Droṇa, a general who taught military skills, and Bhishma, fabled for his wisdom, are referred to as "venerable teachers *(gurus)*".[3] The *Gītā* also refers to *gurus* as teachers in a general sense when Kṛishṇa speaks of "gods *(devas),* twice-born *(dvija, i.e. brāhmaṇs),* teachers *(gurus),* and wise men *(prājñā)*" as being worthy of service.[4] Kṛishṇa is himself referred to as the "most venerable of teachers *(gurus)*" in the world, though in his case his teaching was of course spiritual.[5] But when it comes to speaking of specifically spiritual teachers, the *Gītā* uses other terms:

> Know that by approaching those wise ones *(jñānin),*
> those knowers of the Truth *(Tattva-darshinaḥ),* with reverence,
> and by asking questions of them, and by serving them –
> They will teach you that wisdom *(jñāna),* by knowing which,
> you will see all creation in the Self *(Ātman)* and in Me,
> and never again be deluded.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā 4:34–35*

Patañjali, in his *Yoga Sūtras,* depicts God, the Omniscient One, as the eternal *guru:* "Being unconditioned by time, He is the *guru* even of the ancients."[6]

*Gurus* have been a traditional aspect of Indian culture since ancient times. In Jainism, *guru* is used as a general term for a spiritual teacher, although *āchārya* (teacher) is the specific term for the leader of a mendicant lineage. In Buddhism, which has spread far beyond the bounds of India, although the tradition of a spiritual teacher is prevalent, the term *guru* has had something of a patchy usage. Nowadays, since the *guru* has gained international acceptance as a term for a spiritual teacher, modern Buddhists and commentators use it freely, but in early Buddhism, the term *guru* is rarely encountered, the preference being for *āchārya.* The term *guru* is found more frequently in esoteric or tantric Tibetan Buddhism *(Vajrayāna),* whose schools derive their heritage from tantric *yoga,* where the tradition of a *guru* is strong. Even so, Tibetan spiritual teachers are generally known as *lamas* and are often given the title *rinpoche* (precious one). Hence, the epithet of *Guru Rinpoche* given to Padmasambhava, the eighth-century *Yogāchāra* Buddhist teacher credited with having introduced tantric Buddhism into Tibet, and with founding the Red sect or *Nyingma* ('Old Order'). Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet by King Trisong Detsen in 747 CE, where he is said to have exorcized some demons that were holding up the construction of a Buddhist monastery. The building was subsequently completed in 749, under Padmasambhava's supervision.

Twentieth-century *Vajrayāna guru,* Dilgo Kyentse Rinpoche (1910–1991) – scholar, poet and head of the *Nyingma* school for the last four years of his life – writes of the need for faith and devotion to the *guru,* and the key role he plays in the life of a disciple:

> There is no *buddha* who became enlightened without having relied upon a spiritual teacher. So to be able to practise genuine *dharma,* one must first search for a fully realized master and attend him with total confidence. As it is said in the *sūtras:* "It is through faith alone that one can realize the absolute nature." Without faith, even if one knows all the sections of the teachings by heart, it is of no use. This is particularly true for the practitioner of *Vajrayāna.*
>
> How, then, should we generate this fervent devotion? At present, the *guru* has assumed a human form and resembles an ordinary person,

> but his mind is unwaveringly settled in wisdom. If we could know his innermost mind, we would discover that, through his having been able to discard all defects and to realize all there is to be realized, he is equal in all aspects and qualities to a perfectly enlightened *buddha.* This discovery is the source of deep and genuine devotion.
>
> He is like a great ship for beings to cross the perilous ocean of existence, an unerring captain who guides them to the dry land of liberation, a rain that extinguishes the fire of the passions, a bright sun and moon that dispel the darkness of ignorance, a firm ground that can bear the weight of both good and bad, a wish-fulfilling tree that bestows temporal happiness and ultimate bliss, a treasury of vast and deep instructions, a wish-fulfilling jewel granting all the qualities of realization, a father and mother giving their love equally to all sentient beings, a great river of compassion, a mountain rising above worldly concerns unshaken by the winds of emotions, and a great cloud filled with rain to soothe the torments of the passions.... To have full confidence in him is the sure way to progress towards enlightenment. The warmth of his wisdom and compassion will melt the ore of our being and release the gold of the *buddha*-nature within. Whether or not we achieve realization depends entirely upon devotion to the *guru.*
>
> *Dilgo Kyentse Rinpoche, Wish-Fulfilling Jewel, WJGY pp.10–12*

It is in the Hindu tradition, however, where the term *guru* is most commonly encountered. In times past, every individual, especially among the three higher castes, was expected to adopt a *guru.* There is even a derogatory Hindi term, *nigurā,* which means 'one with no *guru*'. In Sanskrit, the equivalent expression is *anātha* (one with no teacher). A person with no *guru* was looked down upon as an orphan or an unfortunate one. In the sacred thread *(janeu)* ceremony *(upanayana),* a *guru* initiates *(dīkshā)* a boy into the first of the four stages *(āshramas)* of Hindu life, that of *brahmacharya* (celibacy; studentship, discipleship), and the child becomes known as twice-born (S. *dvija,* H. *dojanmā*). Such a *guru* teaches a knowledge of the *Vedas,* and the correct way to perform Vedic rites. He gives the sacred *gāyatrī mantra,* and teaches the disciple the knowledge of *Brahman (brahmavidyā).* He may also give the disciple a personal *mantra* for use in meditation, teach him how to meditate, and keep a careful eye on his progress. He will check whether the disciple recites the sacred scriptures and utters the *mantra* with correct intonation.

It is from this foundation that the term has come to be used specifically for a spiritual teacher or master. Naturally, *gurus* themselves will have attained to different stages on the spiritual journey within. For a mystically evolved *guru,* especially in Vedantic, yogic, tantric and *bhakti* (devotional) schools, initiation may include the transmission of the *guru*'s own spiritual power to the disciple, to assist him on the path to the Divine. In tantric *yoga,* this

transmission is known as *shaktipāta.* In reality, such an initiation is more an awakening of the disciple's own innate spirituality through the power of the *guru*'s grace than a transmission of something from *guru* to disciple.

Nowadays, with the introduction of Western educational methods and schools, the family tradition of seeking a *guru* has diminished, with a consequent decline in the status given to the *guru* in Indian society. Nevertheless, the Indian tradition of seeking a *guru* as a guide on the spiritual path has not died out. In modern times, a number of *gurus* have availed themselves of the media in order to convey their message, their popularity being indicated by the success of an Indian TV channel devoted exclusively to *gurus* and their teachings.

***The Need for a Guru***

In Indian mystical thought, the highest spiritual goal is liberation from birth and death, and the inner realization of God or union with Him. This includes self-realization and freedom from *māyā* (illusion) and the mind. For success in this endeavour, Hindu sacred literature contains many references and stories concerning the need for and the role of a spiritual master. Spiritual truth cannot be realized by the study of books, nor by exercise of the intellect, nor by listening to discourses, even those of a divinely inspired *guru.* Words can never be a true guide in the realms of spiritual experience. What is required is someone who has already made the journey, and whose heightened spiritual awareness can perceive the impediments standing in the way of his disciples, and who can help them clear those impediments, and so spiritually evolve. Spirituality aims to reach the supreme Reality, a Reality that cannot be perceived by the senses and that cannot be contained in words. To reach that hidden Reality, the help of one who has already reached there is not only exceptionally useful, it is essential.

A *guru* teaches by example, by deportment, by deeds, by casual words, and often by silence. The mere presence of a highly spiritualized being raises the consciousness of those who are open to it. Without the grace and inspiration of a living *guru,* it is very difficult to tread the spiritual path. The *guru* is the enabler, motivator and supervisor whose guidance is of primary importance for treading the spiritual path and realizing the spiritual goal of life.

The Indian Sufi musician ʿInāyat Khān (1882–1927) speaks of finding a true *guru* in whom to place full confidence and trust, and the benefits of being in his company:

> The next thing in the attainment of the inner life (after unlearning all that one has previously learnt) is to seek a spiritual guide; someone whom a man can trust absolutely and have every confidence in; someone to whom he can look up, and with whom he is in sympathy, which would culminate in what is called devotion. And if, once he

has found someone in life whom he considers his *guru,* his *murshid,* his guide, then to give to him all confidence, so that not a thing is kept back. If there is something kept back, then what is given might just as well be taken away, because everything must be done fully: either have confidence or not have confidence, either have trust or no trust. On this path of perfection, all things must be done fully.

*ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK1 pp.94–95*

It is just the same with the music of life, which is called mysticism. Although it can be studied, it is of no use unless there is practice also. What is more, if a person asks, "Suppose I play and practise with a book, can I become a great singer?", he would have to be told that he needs a teacher to show him how to use his voice, how to make music. If you have a teacher, you can accomplish in ten years what you could never learn alone, by yourself, in a hundred years. That is the purpose for which the *guru* is intended.

More than this, the presence of the *guru* is an example to the pupil. Nothing can help study or meditation as much as the mere presence, the contact, the association with the teacher. By this means the pupil understands how the teacher would act under various circumstances. It is true that sympathy itself is a very great thing, for by it the pupil intuitively knows what the answer is to this or that problem. . . . Truth cannot be spoken of in words, so if the real, essential Truth cannot be expressed in words or writing, how otherwise could you learn it? It must be learned through contact. And how can you learn it through contact? Well, you see this in your daily life. If your sensitiveness is great and delicate, you can tell whether a person is pleased or displeased without his speaking a word. You can tell whether he is favourably or unfavourably inclined to you, and when this is so there is an exchange of thoughts between yourself and the other; more than this, there is an exchange of spiritual vibrations.

Just by study or practice you cannot realize this truth, this feeling, this peace, this joy which is beyond words, which belongs to being yourself, your natural self. In the East this is called *tavajjuh,* which means 'presence', 'contact', 'association with'. It is in this way that you learn what cannot be learned in any other way. Thus the disciples of Jesus Christ learned by his presence what no study or practice would ever have taught them. And in Muḥammad's time his disciples ʿAlī and Abū Bakr gained very great benefit from his presence.

*ʿInāyat Khān, Sufi Message, SMIK12 pp.102–3*

Many mystics and spiritual teachers have pointed out that since the souls in this world are essentially lost, and blind to the spiritual reality, they need a

teacher to show them how to proceed. But not only must the seeker be sincere; the *guru* must also be qualified to teach, must have the spiritual authority to do so, and must come from an accredited lineage of *gurus.* Swami Vivekananda speaks of *gurus* of the yogic tradition:

> The *guru* is the conveyance in which the spiritual influence is brought to you. Anyone can teach, but the spirit must be passed on by the *guru* to the *shishya* (disciple), and that will fructify. . . . The *guru* passes the thought power, the *mantra,* that he has received from those before him; and nothing can be done without a *guru.* In fact, great danger ensues. Usually, without a *guru,* these *yoga* practices lead to lust; but with one, this seldom happens.
>
> *Swami Vivekananda, Inspired Talks, CWSV7 p.63*

When considering the need for a *guru,* it has often been pointed out that human beings are born ignorant. Practically everything they learn in life is through the help of others. The same is true in spiritual life. Hence, the Hindu saying, "The first *guru* is the mother, the second *guru* is the father, and the third *guru* is the teacher."

Many of the ancient Indian texts have spoken of the need for a spiritual guide. According to the *Ṛig Veda:*

> Someone who is ignorant of a place enquires of one who knows it:
> then he travels forward as directed by the one who knows.
> This, indeed, is the good of instruction:
> he finds the path that leads rapidly forward.
>
> *Ṛig Veda 10:32.7; cf. CVAB p.117*

The *Kaṭha Upanishad* says that the divine Reality is so subtle, and there are so many opinions about it, that instruction from a teacher who has reached the goal is essential. Genuine knowledge of the Divine is rare, but rarer still is a receptive disciple taught by a competent teacher:

> That which many never chance to hear about,
> That which many, though hearing, fail to understand –
> Wonderful is a teacher *(vaktā)* of It, adept a receiver of It,
> wonderful one who understands It, taught by someone competent.
> Instructed by a lesser man, It cannot be properly understood,
> for there are many different ideas about It.
> Unless taught by another, there is no way to It,
> for It is subtler that the subtlest, and cannot be known by concepts.
>
> *Kaṭha Upanishad 1:2.7–8*

In what are two of the earliest uses of *guru* as a spiritual master, the *Muṇḍaka* and *Shvetāshvatara Upanishads* add:

> To know It, one . . . should approach a *guru,*
> wise and established in *Brahman.*
> To one whose mind is tranquil, with senses under control,
> and who approaches in the right manner, let that gnostic *(vidvān)*
> impart knowledge of *Brahman (brahmavidyā)* in its very essence –
> That by which one knows the true, imperishable Being *(Purusha).*
>
> *Muṇḍaka Upanishad 1:2.12–13*

> These matters that have been presented
> will shine forth to a high-souled one *(mahātman)* –
> To one who has the highest devotion *(bhakti)* for God,
> and has the same devotion for his spiritual master *(guru)*
> as he does for God –
> Oh, how they will shine forth to such a high-souled one *(mahātman)!*
>
> *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad 6:23*

Many other Indian texts have said the same, often at far greater length. The *Shiva Saṃhitā* (*c.*C17th–18th) insists that a *guru* is required for the practice of *yoga:*

> Now I shall tell you how to attain success in *yoga* easily, by knowing which, *yogīs* never fail in the practice of *yoga.*
>
> Only knowledge imparted by a *guru,* through his lips, is powerful and useful; otherwise it is fruitless, weak, and the cause of misery. . . .
>
> There is not the least doubt that the *guru* is father, the *guru* is mother, and the *guru* is even God; as such, he should be served by all – by thought, word, and deed.
>
> Everything good relating to one's self is obtained by the *guru*'s grace. Therefore, the *guru* ought to be served daily; without this, nothing has any significance.
>
> *Shiva Saṃhitā 3:10–11, 13–14; cf. SSV p.25*

Often, the language of devotees may seem extravagant. Equating the *guru* with God, as well as with lesser deities, is not uncommon. But as well as being an aspect of the Indian heritage and a common manner of expression, such language conveys a truth concerning the importance of a *guru* in a disciple's life, the esteem in which he is held, and the significance of what he teaches:

The *guru* is *Brahmā,* the *guru* is *Vishṇu,*
the *guru* is God *(Deva),* the imperishable Being *(Sadāchyuta).*
No one is greater than the *guru* in all the three worlds.
Therefore, worship him, with great devotion:
he has taught us divine wisdom *(divya-jñāna),*
he is the spiritual guide *(deshika),*
he is the supreme Lord Himself.
Such a person will gain the fruit of wisdom.
As is the *guru,* so is *Īshvara;* as is *Īshvara,* so is the *guru:*
between the two, there is no difference.
He should be adored with great devotion.
We should not engage in debate concerning the *guru*'s status.
With devotion, we should conceive in our minds
the identical nature of the *guru,* God, and the *ātman* (soul, self).

*Yogashikhā Upanishad 5:56–59; cf. YU p.382*

Whatever, in this world, is the order of the *guru,*
whether productive of happiness, misery or otherwise,
the disciple should carry it out with pleasure,
with no hesitation whatsoever. . . .
To attain perfection,
a person should develop continuous devotion to the *guru.*
The *guru* alone is God *(Hari)* incarnate:
so say the scriptures.

*Brahmavidyā Upanishad 27, 30–31; cf. YU pp.203–4*

I have churned the ocean of the body,
and have seen the incomparable thing come into view.
The *guru* is God, and God is the *guru:*
O Nānak, there is no difference between the two.

*Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 442, AGK*

Should the *guru* and God both appear before me,
to whom should I prostrate?
I will bow before *guru* who introduced God to me.

*Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah. Gurudev kā Ang 10, KSS p.2*

Sahajobāī explains her position in more detail, regarding her master Charaṇdās:

I might leave *Rām,* but I could never forget my *guru:*
in my eyes, *Hari* (God) is not the equal of my *guru.*
*Hari* brought me into this world,
the *guru* freed me from the cycle of birth and death.

*Hari* sent five thieves (passions) with me,
the *guru* released me from their power.
*Hari* entangled me in the web of my family,
the *guru* broke the chains of attachment.

*Hari* bound me with disease and the love of life,
the *guru* made me a *yogī* and freed me from that.
*Hari* confused me with *karma* and *dharma (karm dharm)*
the *guru* showed me my own soul.

*Hari* hid himself from me,
the *guru* gave me a lamp and showed me God.
Above all, *Hari* created the bondage of sweet *māyā,*
but the *guru* removed me from all these illusions.

I offer my body and mind to Charaṇdās:
I might leave *Hari,* but I will never leave my *guru.*
*Sahajobāī, Bānī, Satguru Mahimā kā Ang, Chaupāī 12, SBB p.3;*
*cf. SPBS (11) pp.12–13*

*Gurus* have practised what they have taught, and have themselves adopted a *guru.* Kabīr indicates how this principle is enshrined in the great Indian epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata:*

Who were greater than Rām and Kṛishṇa?
Yet even they adopted a *guru.*
They were masters of the three worlds,
but before the *guru,* they bowed low.
*Kabīr, Sāgar, Sumiran Bodh, KSSB p.55; cf. MSPP p.424*

The *guru* is credited with bestowing wisdom and divine light upon the devoted disciple. Without the *guru,* the soul remains in a state of spiritual ignorance:

O my *guru,* by your grace, you have made me hear the Word *(Sabd),*
and taught me that God is close.
As darkness disappears at sunrise, so have you cleared away
the darkness of delusion *(bhram)* from my soul.
Therefore, I honour you, O *guru,* with mind, words, and deeds.
*Sundar Dās, Bānī, Gurudev ko Ang 1, SBBP p.1*

My *guru* has given me a lamp
that lets me see beyond the horizon.

Now the beginning, middle, and end are all the same –
this has my Lord shown to me.
*Sahajobāī, Bānī, Guru Mahimā 47, SBB p.9*

The *gurus* themselves say that, without a *guru,* spiritual growth is greatly hampered:

Without the *guru*'s instruction,
how can divine knowledge be acquired?
*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 1140, MMS*

Without the *guru,* there is utter darkness,
without the *guru,* understanding does not come….
Without the *guru,* there is no liberation *(mukti).*
*Sawaiyyas, Ādi Granth 1399, AGK*

Were even a million moons to simultaneously rise
to dispel the darkness of night,
a man without a *guru* would still be blind.
*Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Nigurā kā Ang 10, KSS p.16; cf. KWGN p.559*

Without the *guru,* one wanders, coming and going in transmigration,
without the *guru,* one's work (spiritual practice) is useless.
Without the *guru,* the mind is totally unsteady,
without the *guru,* one is unsatisfied, and eats poison.
Without the *guru,* one is stung
by the poisonous snake (of *māyā*), and dies.
O Nānak without the *guru,* all is lost.
*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 942, AGK*

Only with the help of a *guru* can the soul free itself from the desire to live in the realm of the five material senses:

Be on your guard, O wayfarer –
robbers have come and set their trap for you.
Do not travel alone –
you won't make it without a master *(guru).*
They (these robbers) will snatch away everything you've gathered,
and turn you into their slave.
These thugs hold up everyone without exception,
and rob all those who are without a master *(guru).*
Listen to me, dear friend, abandon their company and stay aloof.

Time and again I repeat this to you:
the *guru* is the only protector.
Love the *guru* and be steadfast in your love,
then you will doubtless reach your destination.
Taking refuge in the *guru*'s feet is the heart of the matter:
it will help you to overcome your lust for sensual pleasures –
For these are the thugs that rob you on your journey.

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:4.1–9,*
*SBP p.116, SBPS pp.132–33*

The world is founded upon deceit and illusion. One who does not hold fast to a *guru* who is the embodiment of Truth and Reality is soon swept away, whoever he may be:

None can cross the ocean of mundane existence without a *guru,*
even if he were the equal of *Brahmā* or *Shiva.*

*Tulsīdās, Rām Charit Mānas 7:92.3; cf. RCML p.1047*

It is a tortuous, crooked path – do not let your mind be your guide.
Deep and deadly are the currents in the ocean of life –
without a master *(guru),* how will you cross over to the other side?
Love your master as a lover adores his sweetheart.
Stay in his company with a heart filled with longing,
and hold onto his feet with all your mind.
Be open with him – no cunning or deceit –
and try to grasp his message.

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 15:14.1–5,*
*SBP p.122, SBPS pp.156–57*

Books and scriptures simply cannot replace a living teacher:

The Lord is immaculate and radiantly bright:
without the *guru,* He cannot be found.
He cannot be understood by reading scriptures:
the deceitful pretenders are deluded by doubt.
Through the *guru*'s teachings, the Lord is always found,
and the tongue is permeated with the sublime essence of the Lord.

*Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 66, AGK*

I have searched all the *Shāstras,* the *Vedas* and the *Smṛitis,*
and they all affirm one thing:
Without the *guru,* no one obtains liberation:
see and reflect upon this in your mind.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 495, AGK*

Religious observances will not take a soul to God:

> Without the beneficent *guru,* no one attains to the Lord,
> though he may do . . . millions of *karams* (rituals).
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 1057, MMS*

So writes Guru Amardās in a hymn from the *Ādi Granth.* In another hymn from the same book, Guru Nānak says that the endless study of sacred texts and multiple pilgrimages to holy places only serve to increase vanity. The reality is that whatever a person may do, everyone is responsible for his own *karma.* In search of God, some take to fasting, some go about naked, and some take a vow of silence, but without the help of a *guru,* how can anyone awaken from his slumber? "Without the Name *(Nām)*", the divine Word *(Shabd),* he concludes, no such religious or ascetic practices are acceptable.[7]

Whatever practices – internal or external – to which a person may be devoted, the essential problem remains that of bringing the mind under control. For that, the wisdom and innate spirituality of a *guru* are required:

> Water remains confined within the pitcher, but without water,
> the pitcher could not have been formed;
> Just so, the mind is restrained by spiritual wisdom,
> but without the *guru,* there is no spiritual wisdom.
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 469, AGK*

Without the spiritual influence of a *guru,* the mind becomes absorbed in the darkness of illusion:

> The blind, self-willed *manmukh* (worldly person) acts blindly,
> and earns only poison in this world.
> Enticed by *māyā* (illusion), he suffers in constant pain,
> without the most beloved *guru.*
> *Guru Amardās, Ādi Granth 753, AGK*

> If a hundred moons were to rise, and a thousand suns appear,
> even with such light, there would still be pitch darkness
> without the *guru.*
> *Guru Angad, Ādi Granth 463, AGK*

These are big claims, but the primary characteristic of a perfect *guru* that makes it possible for him to bring souls into contact with the Divine and to rescue them from this creation is his union with the divine Word *(Shabd)* or Name *(Nām).* In fact, the real *guru* is actually this divine power, the creative emanation of God by which all things come into being and are sustained in existence:

Meditate on the image of the *guru* within your mind,
let your mind accept the *guru*'s *Shabd* (Word).…
Enshrine the *guru*'s feet within your heart,
bow in humility forever before the *guru,* the supreme Lord God.
Let no one wander in doubt in the world,
without the *guru,* no one can cross over.
The *guru* shows the path to those who have wandered off:
he leads them to renounce others,
and attaches them to devotional worship of the Lord.
He obliterates the fear of birth and death:
the glorious greatness of the perfect *guru* is endless.
By *guru*'s grace, the inverted heart lotus blossoms forth,
and the light shines forth in the darkness.
Through the *guru,* know the One who created you:
by the *guru*'s mercy, the foolish mind comes to believe.
The *guru* is the Creator; the *guru* has the power to do everything,
the *guru* is the transcendent Lord; He is, and always shall be.
Says Nānak, God has inspired me to know this:
without the *guru,* liberation is not obtained.

*Guru Arjun, Ādi Granth 864, AGK*

Through the *guru*'s help, human weakness is erased, the way within is made clear, and the soul escapes from the stormy ocean of the world. Without him, to a greater or lesser extent, the soul remains spiritually asleep:

Without the *guru,* love does not well up,
and the filth of egotism does not depart.

*Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 60, AGK*

The *guru* is therefore regarded as the key to spiritual enlightenment:

The key of the *guru* opens the lock of attachment,
in the house of the mind, under the roof of the body.
O Nānak, without the *guru,* the door of the mind cannot be opened:
no one else holds the key in (his) hand.

*Guru Angad, Ādi Granth 1237, AGK*

Or, using another metaphor:

The *guru* is the boat, and the *guru* is the boatman:
without the *guru,* no one can cross over.
By *guru*'s grace, God is obtained:
without the *guru,* no one is liberated.

*Sawaiyyas, Ādi Granth 1401, AGK*

There are also anecdotes in Indian sacred literature where persons without a *guru* are refused entry to the heavens of *svarga* and *vaikuṇṭha.* Probably the most well known of these is a story related in the *Mahābhārata* concerning Shukadeva, the son of the mythical Ṛishi Vyāsa, who is said to be the compiler of the *Vedas.* Shukadeva was said to have been born a *jñānī* (one possessed of high spiritual wisdom). Even so, his father told him that if he wanted liberation he must first seek a *guru.* Shukadeva then went to the Rāja Janaka, ruler of Videha.[8]

In a popular extension to the story, the advice of Shukadeva's father arises from an incident in which Shukadeva visits *vaikuṇṭha,* the heaven presided over by the deity *Vishṇu.* On reaching there, however, the *dvārapālas* (gatekeepers) turned him back. At this he was enraged, and relayed the insult to his father. But his father told him that he had been treated correctly, and that the gates of heaven were only open to those who had adopted a *guru,* however exalted or spiritually advanced the disciple may already be. Kabīr therefore reminds his readers:

> Beware! Recall the story of Sukdev, a great *yogī* in his previous birth:
> Devoted to the Lord even in the womb,
> he was turned away from paradise because he had no *guru.*
>
> *Kabīr, Sākhī Sangrah, Nigurā kā Ang 3, KSS p.15; cf. KGME p.198*

However important the physical form of a *guru* may be, his real form is not the body. His real form is the spiritual power of which he is a manifestation. The *guru's* body and his human personality will die, just like that of everybody else. In the case of a *guru* who teaches the path of the divine Word *(Shabd, Bāṇī),* his real form is that creative power:

> The *Bāṇī* is *guru,* and *guru* is the *Bāṇī:*
> within the *Bāṇī,* the ambrosial nectar is contained.
> If his humble servant believes, and acts according to the *gurbāṇī,*
> then the *guru,* in person, emancipates him.
>
> *Guru Rāmdās, Ādi Granth 982, AGK*

> Make him your *guru,* who implants the truth within you,
> who leads you to speak the unspoken Speech,
> and who merges you in the Word *(Sabad).*
>
> *Guru Nānak, Ādi Granth 686, AGK*

***Characteristics of a Guru***

The ideal *guru* is fully enlightened, fully God-realized. As such he is also a perfect human being. The tantric *yoga* text, the *Kulārṇava Tantra,* contains an extensive section concerning the characteristics and attributes of a *guru*

from the tantric perspective, although much of what is said is common to all traditions:

> The *guru* . . . is clean of apparel, charming, endowed with all (becoming) features, and possessed of all his limbs. He understands the truth of all *āgamas* (scriptures) and the application of all *mantras* (verbal formulae). He bewitches the world, is sweet-looking like a god, of happy countenance, easy of access, and clean. He is one who dissipates delusion and doubt; who knows the meaning of gestures *(mudrās);* who is wise and knows the pros and cons (of everything); whose attention is directed within, though his look is outward; who knows everything; who knows the proper place and time for everything; in whose command lie *siddhis* (powers); who knows the past, present, and future; who is able to upbraid and correct; who is capable of piercing insight; who is instructing, quiet, and compassionate to all creatures; who is in control of the movements of his senses; who has conquered the six enemies of desire, anger, greed, delusion, jealousy, and pride; . . . who knows the distinction between the fit receptacle and the unfit; . . . who condemns the doctrines of the unawakened; who is stainless, always content, independent, . . . and the lover of good devotees; who is steadfast, merciful, speaks with a ready smile, dear to devotees, always generous, deep, and quintessentially practical; . . . who is devoid of anger, hate, fear, pain, ostentation, and egoism; . . . who is content with what comes by itself; who distinguishes good from bad; who is unattached to women, wealth, bad company, and vice, *etc.;* who has a feeling of oneness with all; who is free from dualities; . . . who is not over eager; who is without self-will and partiality; who is capable; who does not sell *mantra, yantra* (talismans) and *tantra* (teachings) for the sake of money or to display his learning; who is unattached, without doubts, with firm views, . . . the same in praise and criticism, silent, without preference, and free from disease.
>
> *Kulārṇava Tantra 13:38–50, KTAA pp.297–98; cf. KTAA (9) pp.90–91*

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* then goes on to describe the *guru*'s relationship with God. In the yogic and tantric tradition, *Shiva* is often depicted as the supreme Being:

> The *guru* . . . is the very Lord Himself. To approach the *guru,* to worship the *guru,* is to approach the Lord, to worship the Lord. Why should the Lord choose to manifest through the *guru,* why should He not act directly? *Shiva* is really all-pervading, subtle, above the mind, without features, imperishable, of the form of the ether, eternal, infinite; how can such a one be worshipped? That is why, out of compassion for his

creatures, He takes the form of the *guru,* and when so worshipped in devotion, grants liberation and fulfilment. *Shiva* has no binding form; *Shiva* is not perceivable by the human eye; therefore, in the form of the *guru,* He protects the disciple who conforms to the *dharma* (way).

The *guru* is none other than the supreme *Shiva* enclosed in human skin; he walks the earth, concealed, for the purpose of bestowing grace on good disciples. Though formless, *Shiva,* the storehouse of compassion, takes form for the protection of good devotees, and acts in the world as though he were a householder. He conceals the (third) eye on the forehead, his crescent moon, and two of his (four) hands, and functions in the form of the *guru* on the earth. The *guru* is none other than *Shiva* without His three eyes, *Vishṇu* without His four arms, *Brahmā* without His four faces. To him who is loaded with sinful *karma,* the *guru* appears to be human; but to him whose *karma* is auspicious and meritful, the *guru* appears as *Shiva.* The less fortunate do not recognize the *guru,* the embodiment of the supreme Truth, even when face to face with him, like the blind before the arisen sun. Verily, the *guru* is none else but *Sadāshiva;* that is the truth, there is no doubt about it. *Shiva* himself is the *guru;* otherwise who is it that gives fulfilment and liberation? There is no difference between *Sadāshiva* (God) and the *guru;* it is sinful to make a distinction. He is the *guru* because, taking the form of the preceptor, he cuts asunder all the bonds of the *pashu* (the 'animal' in a human being) and leads the disciple to the supreme state. The storehouse of compassion, *Īshvara,* being the fount of all grace, takes the form of the *guru* and releases the 'animal' by His initiation.

*Kulārṇava Tantra 13:51–63, KTAA pp.298–300; cf. KTAA (9) pp.91–92*

The *guru* is then portrayed more specifically from the perspective of yogic and tantric philosophy and practice:

He who makes you know, 'I am the knower of the essence of all philosophy, I am the core,' who is inseparate (from *Brahman*), ever pleased in heart – he is the *guru.*

He who sets aside the (normal) sequence of the stages *(āshrama)* and class *(varṇa)* and dwells ever in his own self, to whom the supreme Light itself is both the *varṇa* and *āshrama,* that *yogī* – he is the *guru.*

He who knows the organization of the *chakras* (subtle energy centres) in the body, . . . – he is the *guru.*

He who knows the Truth that is born of pure Consciousness, born of supreme *ānanda* (bliss) – he is the *guru.*

He who knows the past and the future, *tantra* and *mantra,* the doctrines of *shākta* (divine energy) and *Shambhu (Shiva)* . . . – he is the *guru.* . . .

He who knows the quintuplet of the states of waking, dream, sound sleep, the fourth *(turīya)* state, and what is beyond it – he is the *guru.*

*Kulārṇava Tantra 13:67–69, 71–72, 75, KTAA pp.300–1; cf. KTAA (9) pp.92–93*

The text then goes on to depict the *guru* as he who knows all the many details and practices of tantric *yoga,* better known in modern times as *haṭha yoga* and *prāṇāyāma.*

***Gurus of Many Levels***

Even after a soul has developed the power to leave the body at will, and the person may therefore be justifiably called a mystic with a degree of wisdom and spiritual elevation far in excess of the average human being, there still remain many stations or stages of the inner journey to be crossed. Individual *gurus* may have reached any – or none – of these stages, and will differ in their spiritual attainment, depending on the stage they have reached. A *guru* who has reached the highest level is known as a *satguru* or *sadguru* (true *guru*), or a *pūran gurū* (Pu. perfect *guru*). It is generally understood, however, that no *guru* can take a disciple beyond the level of his own attainment. No teacher can teach something that he does not know.

All good things get counterfeited. The more valuable something is, the more it gets copied. The same is true in the world of *gurus.* Consequently, when a person encounters a *guru,* it is valid to question the level he has attained. In fact, only a little research reveals that few *gurus* have attained full enlightenment or God-realization, and it is very difficult for a normal human being to distinguish which have and which have not. This is exacerbated by the fact that many spiritual seekers are credulous and trusting idealists who are easily misled. Swami Shiv Dayal Singh counsels:

Accept your *guru* after thorough scrutiny, brother,
for without a *guru,* no one can find the way.
Everyone is drowning because they have failed to find someone
to ferry them across this ocean of existence.
Ascetics and the learned are helpless in this world,
*yogīs* and theologians have given up in despair.
How could they cross this ocean,
when they have developed no love for the saints?

*Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Sār Bachan Poetry 18:1.1–4 SBP p.133, SBPS pp.178–79*

Perhaps the easiest *gurus* to discount are those who are simply teachers of the scriptures. Kabīr, generally acknowledged to have been a master of the highest order, describes such *gurus:*

> The *brāhmaṇ* may be the *guru* of the world,
> but he is not the *guru* of the devotees.
> He rots and dies in the perplexities of the four *Vedas.*
>
> *Kabīr, Ādi Granth 1377, AGK*

In a passage listing a number of the pseudo-spiritual practices prevalent many centuries ago, the *Maitrī Upanishad* warns against deception and distraction. Updated into a modern context, and looking at the many -isms, -ologies and odd practices of present times, it is clear that the world has changed very little in this regard:

> The net of delusion originates in the association of one who is worthy of heaven with those who are unworthy of heaven. Though they are told that there is a (shady) grove up ahead, they still seek shelter under a low bush. Now there are some who are always in good humour, always abroad, always begging, and who make a permanent living by teaching various practices. And others there are who are beggars in towns, who perform sacrifices for the unworthy.... And others there are who are wicked, wearers of matted locks, dancers, mercenaries, wandering mendicants *(pravrajita),* and actors – they are renegades (claiming to be) in the King's (God's) service.
>
> And others there are who, for a price, profess that they can mitigate (the evil influences) of *yakshas* (spirits), *rākshasas* (demons), ghosts, goblins, devils, serpents, imps, and the like. And others there are who, under false pretexts, wear the saffron robes, earrings, and skulls (of certain schools of *sādhus*). And others there are who love to distract believers in the *Vedas* by the jugglery of false reasoning, analogies and circular arguments. With all these one should not associate. These creatures are manifestly thieves, unworthy of heaven. For thus has it been said:
>
> > The world bewildered by doctrines that deny the soul,
> > by false comparisons and 'proofs',
> > does not discern the difference
> > between knowledge and ignorance.
> >
> > *Maitrī Upanishad 7:8; cf. PU p.855, TPU p.455*

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* explains how difficult it is to find a true *guru,* including the time-honoured observation, as true today as it was when it was written, "Many are the *gurus* who rob the disciple of his wealth; but rare is the *guru* who removes the afflictions of the disciple":

> Difficult to obtain is the *guru* whose mere instruction gives rise to knowledge, even as food gives instant contentment to the hungry.

Many are the *gurus* like the lamps (you find) in every house, but rare is the *guru* who lights up all like the sun.

Many are the *gurus* having great proficiency in the *Vedas* and *Shāstras,* but rare is the *guru* who has attained to the supreme Truth.

Many are the *gurus* on earth who give what is other than the self *(ātman),* but rare is the *guru* in all the (three) worlds who brings to light the *ātman.*...

Many are the *gurus* who rob the disciple of his wealth, but rare is the *guru* who removes the afflictions of the disciple....

He is the *guru* from whose contact flows supreme bliss; the intelligent man shall choose such a one as his *guru* and no other....

As butter melts in the vicinity of fire, so, in the proximity of the holy *guru,* all sin dissolves.

As well-lit fire burns all fuel – dry and moist – so the glance of the *guru* burns up the sin of the disciple in a moment.

As a mound of cotton blown about by a great storm is scattered in all the ten directions, so the mound of sins is driven away by the compassion of the *guru.*

As darkness is destroyed at the very sight of a lamp, so is ignorance destroyed at the very sight of the holy *guru.*...

If one has no achievement oneself, how can he help others to achieve? He who knows not the reality of *Brahman* in the form of mind in himself, how can he give liberation to another?... The knower of Truth alone is both liberated and liberator.

The knower of Truth makes even a *pashu* ('animal', a person with low tendencies) understand (the Truth). But from one who is devoid of knowledge how is it possible to receive the truth of the Self? Those who are instructed by the knowers of Truth undoubtedly become knowers of Truth themselves. Those who are instructed by *pashus* are verily *pashus.*...

Only a liberated one can liberate: how indeed can an unliberated one be a liberator? Only one who is proficient in knowledge can uplift the foolish: how indeed can the foolish uplift the foolish? Only a boat can ferry a stone across: it is sure that a stone cannot ferry a stone! Engrossed in the affairs of the world, one obtains no fruit whatever either here or there (this world or the next) by adopting a *guru* who does not know the Truth.

*Kulārṇava Tantra 13:103–6, 108, 110, 113–16, 119–20, 126, KTAA pp.304–6; cf. KTAA (9) pp.96–98*

A seeker's task is not easy, for few can truly assess the inner spiritual condition of another. Sahajobāī therefore suggests some of the qualities to look for in a true master:

Sahajo says, find a *guru* who will be like a washerman *(dhobī):*
he will give you the soap of knowledge *(gyān),*
and wash away all your sins.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who can erase all your doubts:
he will be like the rain cloud that makes no distinction
between high and low.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who shines like the sun:
he will illuminate all life – prince and pauper equally.
Sahajo says, find a *guru* who is impartial, free from greed:
be his disciple and drown, drown, in the ocean of his love.

Sahajo says, there are hordes of *gurus* wandering around,
ignorant men who know nothing of meditation.
They reach out to many, and can save none:
these *gurus* are common cheats and villains,
men who want your money.
Sahajo says, find a true *guru,* who can give you
the fruits of the abode of liberation.

All are ensnared by the web of attachment,
animals, birds, humans – all fall into the trap.
Says Sahajo, only those who take refuge in the *satguru* are saved:
those without a *satguru* remain forever entangled.
Over and over again, they enter into relationships
among the eighty-four thousand species,
because they have no *satguru,*
who can reach out and set them free.

He who is in the company of the *guru*
day and night, throughout his life,
he always remains united to the Lord.
Sahajo says, without a *guru,* you will never have rest.

*Sahajobāī, Bānī, Guru Mahimā 57–65, SBB p.10; cf. SPBS (30) pp.48–51*

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) also explains why a *guru* is necessary, and the hazards involved in finding one:

> Then another thing is necessary, and that is the coming in direct contact with the *mahāpurushas* (great beings), and thus moulding our lives in accordance with those of the great-souled ones who have reached the goal. Even disgust for the world and a burning desire for God are not sufficient. Initiation by the *guru* is necessary. Why? Because it is the bringing of yourself into connection with that great

source of power which has been handed down through generations from one *guru* to another, in uninterrupted succession. The devotee must seek and accept the *guru* or spiritual preceptor as his counsellor, philosopher, friend, and guide. In short, the *guru* is the *sine qua non* of progress in the path of spirituality. . . .

Nowadays, everyone wants to be a *guru;* even a poor beggar wants to make a gift of a *lakh* of rupees! Then the *guru* must be without a touch of taint, and he must be *akāmahata* – unhurt by any desire. He should have no other motive except that of purely doing good to others. He should be an ocean of mercy without reason and not impart religious teaching with a view to gaining name or fame, or anything pertaining to selfish interest. And he must be the intense knower of *Brahman,* that is, one who has realized *Brahman* even as tangibly as an *āmalaka* fruit in the palm of the hand.[9] Such is the *guru,* says the *shruti* (scriptures). When spiritual union is established with such a *guru,* then comes realization of God – then God-vision becomes easy of attainment.

*Swami Vivekananda,What Have I Learnt? CWSV3 pp.452–53*

After writing of the difficulties faced by the seeker, he goes on to consider the qualities required by a *guru:*

There are still greater dangers in regard to the transmitter, the *guru.* There are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything, and not only do not stop there, but offer to take others on their shoulders; and thus – the blind leading the blind – both fall into the ditch. "Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind."[10] The world is full of these. Every one wants to be a teacher, every beggar wants to make a gift of a million dollars! Just as these beggars are ridiculous, so are these teachers.

How are we to know a teacher, then? The sun requires no torch to make it visible, we need not light a candle in order to see it. When the sun rises, we automatically become aware of the fact, and when a teacher of men comes to help us, the soul will instinctively know that truth has already begun to shine upon it. Truth stands on its own evidence, it does not require any other testimony to prove it true, it is self effulgent. It penetrates into the innermost corners of our nature, and in its presence the whole universe stands up and says, "This is truth." The teachers whose wisdom and truth shine like the light of the sun are the very greatest the world has known, and they are worshipped as God by the major portion of mankind. But we may get help from

> comparatively lesser ones also; only we ourselves do not possess intuition enough to judge properly of the man from whom we receive teaching and guidance; so there ought to be certain tests, certain conditions, for the teacher to satisfy, as there are also for the taught.
>
> *Swami Vivekananda, Bhakti Yoga, CWSV3 pp.47–48*

Vivekananda goes on to discuss more specifically how to decide who is a true *guru:*

> (Firstly,) we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, *Vedas,* and *Qur'āns;* but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology – the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true religious teacher. The network of the words of the scriptures is like a huge forest in which the human mind often loses itself and finds no way out. . . . Those who employ such methods to impart religion to others are only desirous to show off their learning, so that the world may praise them as great scholars. You will find that none of the great teachers of the world ever went into these various explanations of the text; there is with them no attempt at 'text torturing', no eternal playing upon the meaning of words and their roots. Yet they taught nobly, while others who have nothing to teach have taken up a word sometimes, and written a three-volume book on its origin, on the man who used it first, and on what that man was accustomed to eat, and how long he slept, and so on. . . .
>
> The second condition necessary in the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked, "Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher? We have only to judge of what he says, and take that up." This is not right. If a man wants to teach me something of dynamics, or chemistry, or any other physical science, he may be anything he likes, because what the physical sciences require is merely an intellectual equipment. But in the spiritual sciences, it is impossible from first to last that there can be any spiritual light in the soul that is impure. What religion can an impure man teach? The *sine qua non* of acquiring spiritual truth for one's self or for imparting it to others is purity of heart and soul. A vision of God or a glimpse of the beyond never comes until the soul is pure. Hence with the teacher of religion, we must see first what he is, and then what he says. He must be perfectly pure, and then alone comes the value of his words, because he is only then the true 'transmitter'. What can he transmit if he has not spiritual power in himself? There must be the worthy vibration of spirituality in the mind of the teacher, so that it may be

> sympathetically conveyed to the mind of the taught. The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something, and not one of mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore the teacher must be pure.
>
> The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive – for money, name, or fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or for name, will immediately destroy this conveying medium. God is love, and only he who has known God as love can be a teacher of godliness and God to man.
>
> When you see that in your teacher these conditions are all fulfilled, you are safe; if they are not, it is unsafe to allow yourself to be taught by him, for there is the great danger that, if he cannot convey goodness to your heart, he may convey wickedness. This danger must by all means be guarded against – "He who is learned in the scriptures, sinless, unpolluted by lust, and is the greatest knower of *Brahman*"[11] is the real teacher.
>
> *Swami Vivekananda, Bhakti Yoga, CWSV3 pp.48–51*

Mystics, then, are almost universally agreed on the need of a *guru* for a seeker of the higher spiritual path, and of the discrimination required in seeking such a teacher. Clearly, there are many possible pitfalls, and the true seeker can perhaps take heart at the traditional adage, "When the disciple *(chela)* is ready, the *guru* appears." Until then, American *Zen* Buddhist teacher Philip Kapleau (1912–2004) has some pithy suggestions:

> Shun any teacher who says, "I am enlightened." Beware of any *guru* who claims to be an *avatāra,* an incarnation of a god, or Buddha. Above all, avoid the 'master' who allows his followers to shout his praises with arms upraised at mass rallies, and to laud him as the holiest of holies. He is the greatest menace.
>
> *Philip Kapleau, Zen: Dawn in the West, ZDWK p.29*

See also: **āchārya**, **sadguru**.

1. See "guru," *Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy, CDIP.*
2. *E.g. Mahābhārata* 2:38.21, *MRS1* p.780, *MG2* (2:38.20) p.275, *MV2* (2:38) p.79.
3. *Bhagavad Gītā* 2:5.
4. *Bhagavad Gītā* 17:14.

5. *Bhagavad Gītā* 11:43.
6. Patañjali, *Yoga Sūtras* 1:26, *SYYP* p.61.
7. Guru Nānak, *Ādi Granth* 467, *AGK.*
8. *Cf. Mahābhārata* 12:325.6–7, *MRS5* p.5301.
9. *Vajrasūchikā Upanishad* 9.
10. *Kaṭha Upanishad* 1:2.5.
11. A generalized statement of Upanishadic philosophy.

**guruṇī** (Pk) *Lit.* a female *guru;* in present times, the title given to the leader of a group of Jain nuns of the *Shvetāmbara* tradition, who live and travel together; also called a *pravartinī;* known among *Shvetāmbara Terāpanthīs* as an *agragaṇyā* (foremost one); appointed, often for life, by the male *āchārya* (teacher) of the mendicant order to which the group is a part; generally succeeded by the most senior nun in her lineage. In the past, the title may have been used for an aged and revered nun having both spiritual and administrative duties.[1]

Other nuns in the Jain mendicant hierarchy are called by a variety of names, according to their sectarian tradition. Among *Shvetāmbaras,* a nun holding no particular position is known as a *sādhvī.* Among *Shvetāmbara Sthānakavāsīs,* she is also called a *mahāsatī* (highly virtuous woman). The chief nun in the *Shvetāmbara Terāpanthī* tradition is called the *sādhvī pramukhā* (principal nun), who is superior to the *agragaṇyās* or group leaders. Among *Digambaras,* an ordinary nun is an *āryikā,* and one who has reached the first degree of the eleventh stage *(pratimā)* of renunciation, that of the advanced householder prior to taking the vows of a mendicant, is a *kshullikā.*

See also: **agragaṇyā**, **āryakā**, **sādhvī**.

1. See "guruṇī," *A to Z of Jainism, AZJW.*

**ḥabīb** (A/P) *Lit.* beloved, friend, cherished one; also, lover; from the same root as *ḥubb* (love), *maḥbūb* (beloved), *muḥibb* (lover) and *maḥabbah* (love, affection, lovingkindness); as Ḥabīb Allāh (Beloved of God), a common epithet of Muḥammad, often shortened to Ḥabīb; in Sufism, the divine beloved *(ḥabīb),* often implying the inner spiritual form of the beloved as the manifestation of the divine beauty:

> When a ray of the beloved's *(ḥabīb)* beauty shone upon my heart,
> the eye of the soul saw that beauty
> in the perfection of the friend *(ḥabīb).*
>
> *Maghribī, Dīvān 13:123, DSMR p.75; cf. in SSE2 p.45*

An inner vision of such beauty and spiritual depth inflames great longing in the soul to see the beloved again and again. Only the vision of the beloved can assuage the yearning:

> At dawn, again and again, each evening,
> my eyes, due to love of you, keep weeping.
> My liver, bitten by the snake of longing –
> no doctor *(ṭabīb)* or charmer has the means of curing it.
> None but the beloved *(ḥabīb),* who inflames me with longing,
> can, if he chooses, quench that raging fire.
>
> *Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā', Morals for the Heart 4:22,*
> *FFNA p.253; cf. MHN p.67*

Yet, says Ḥāfiẓ, such longing matures better if kept hidden:

> It is better to keep your longing for the beloved
> from the eyes of the envious;
> For one who harbours spite cannot keep a secret.
>
> *Ḥāfiẓ, Dīvān, DHA p.139, DIH p.244; cf. DHWC (299:3) p.521; cf. in SSE2 p.45*

*Ḥabīb* is often contrasted with the rhyming word *ṭabīb* (physician, doctor). The *ḥabīb* is as the divine beloved who heals the ailments of the soul; *ṭabīb* is the physician who heals the body:

> Seek no cure for heartache from a doctor *(ṭabīb):*
> it can only be cured by the sweet fragrance of the beloved *(ḥabīb).*
>
> *'Irāqī, Kullīyāt 5635, KHI p.363; cf. in SSE2 p.45*

And:

> The worldly sense is the ladder to this world,
> the spiritual sense is the ladder to heaven.
> Seek the well-being of the former sense
> from the physician *(ṭabīb);*
> Beg the well-being of the latter from the beloved *(ḥabīb).*
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī I:303–4; cf. MJR2 p.20*

See also: **yār**.

**hādī** (A/P) *Lit.* guide; from *hadá* (to lead, to guide, to show, to direct); in Sufism, a spiritual guide; as *al-Hādī* (the Guide), one of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh.* According to the *Qur'ān,* all peoples have been sent a guide: "…and

to every people a guide *(hādī).*"[1] Rūmī adds that in every age, there is a *hādī* who is the personification of "Wisdom *(Khirad)*". This "Wisdom" is the divine Intelligence inherent in the Word or creative power. The *Mahdī* is the one who will come in the years before the Day of Judgment to rid the world of evil:

> That saint *(walī),* then, is the living *imām* who arises in every age,
> whether he be a descendant of ʿUmar or ʿAlī.
> He is the *Mahdī* and the *hādī,* O seeker of the way:
> he is both hidden and seated before your face.
> He is as the Light *(Nūr),*
> and Wisdom *(Khirad)* is his Gabriel (divine messenger).
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī II:817–19; cf. MJR2 p.263*

In a long and complex story, Rūmī relates how Bilqīs, the rich and intelligent Queen of Sheba, seeking to impress the wise Solomon (who in the story represents the perfect saint), brings vast wealth to him as a gift. But Solomon displays a far greater wealth, and only chides her for bringing paltry gifts to the divine Giver. Neither her gold nor her intelligence mean anything before the spiritual wealth of God. Bilqīs epitomizes the worldly person, and Rūmī counsels her to seek the inner kingdom, which is the real dwelling place of the *hādī:*

> Arise, O Bilqīs! Come, behold for once
> the kingdom of the *shāhs* and *sulṭāns* of religion.
> Inwardly, he is seated in the rose garden (of God):
> outwardly he is acting as a *hādī* among his friends.
> The garden goes with him wherever he goes,
> but it is concealed from the people.
> The Fruit is making entreaty, saying, "Eat of me":
> the Water of Life is come, saying, "Drink of me."
> Make a circuit of heaven without wing and feather,
> like the sun, and like the full-moon, and like the new moon.
> You will move, like the spirit, without foot;
> You will eat a hundred dainties, without chewing a morsel.
>
> *Rūmī, Maśnavī IV:1101–6; cf. MJR4 p.333*

*Hādī* also means a camel driver *(sārbān),* and Arabic folklore contains many stories concerning camels that have died while listening to the sweet voice of their *hādī.* Some camel drivers lead from the front with their voice, while others walk behind with a goad. In Sufi poetry, souls are likened to camels, while the *hādī* is the perfect saint. The voice of the camel driver and the hubbub of departure is the divine music of the creative power.

See also: **dalīl**, **guide**, **hidāyah** (▸4), **sārbān**.

1. *Qur'ān* 13:7, *AYA*.

**ḥaḍrah** (A), **ḥażrat** (P) *Lit.* presence, manifestation, appearance, sign; related to *ḥuḍūr* (presence) and to *ḥāḍir* (present); in Sufism, the presence of God, the presence of a spiritual master, the manifestation or presence of the Divine at a particular level of creation; an epithet of respect and reverence, used in both secular and religious contexts, as in Ḥażrat ʿInāyat Khān, Ḥażrat ʿĪsá (Jesus) or Ḥażrat Maryam (Mary, the mother of Jesus); sometimes used to designate a circle of people engaged in *dhikr* (remembrance), the purpose of *dhikr* being to enter into the divine presence; in North Africa, a name for *dhikr al-ṣadr* (a form of spiritual practice).

See also: **dhikr** (▸3), **al-Ḥaḍarāt al-Ilāhīyah al-Khams** (4.1).

**hàifēng** (C) *Lit.* a mad man, a lunatic in *circa* thirteenth-century China. See **yú**.

**ḥakham** (He) *Lit.* wise, sage; often used for the intellectually accomplished religious sage; mystically, the one who has *ḥokhmah* (wisdom) – the inner spiritual knowledge of the divine Name, which is the divine creative power or will; one who has achieved the level of the *sefirah* of *Ḥokhmah* in the kabbalistic system of the *sefirot* (the emanations of the Divine).

Speaking in the name of God, the prophet Hosea promises that God will shower His grace on the nation of Israel. Using the metaphor of dew for divine knowledge, he likens God to a fruit-bearing tree. As a result, Ephraim, an affectionate epithet for the people of Israel, will be motivated to relinquish idol worship. But he adds that only the wise *(ḥakham)* will understand the depth of these teachings:

> I will be as the dew to Israel: he shall flower like the lily, and cast forth his roots like the (cedars of) Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance *(re´aḥ)* like the Lebanon. They who dwell in his shadow shall return; they shall revive like corn, and blossom like the vine: their fragrance *(zekher)* shall be like the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim shall say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" I answer him and look on him: "I am like a leafy cypress tree; from me is your fruit found. Whoever is wise *(ḥakham),* let him understand these things: whoever is prudent let him know them; for the ways of the Lord

> are right, and the just do walk in them: but the transgressors shall stumble in them."
>
> *Hosea 14:5–10; cf. KB*

See also: **ḥakīm**, **Ḥokhmah** (3.1), **Wisdom** (3.1).

**ḥakīm** (A/P) *Lit.* wise, learned, prudent, judicious; a philosopher, a scholar, an intellectual; a physician, a doctor; a wise man, a sage, a mystic, a spiritual master; sometimes qualified as *ḥakīm-i illāhī* (divine sage) to distinguish a spiritual master from a worldly philosopher; an epithet of respect, as in Ḥakīm Sanāʾī, whom Rūmī describes as "that sage *(ḥakīm)* of the Unseen and glory of them that know";[1] also, as *al-Ḥakīm* (the Wise), one of the ninety-nine names of *Allāh.*

In early Muslim times especially, a *ḥakīm* was a physician or doctor who practised according to the traditional *Yūnānī* (Greek) system of Islamic medicine, which uses herbs and other preparations, together with natural means of diagnosis. Medicine was considered a part of philosophy at that time, philosophy being regarded as an essential aspect of the Muslim healing arts, and a *ḥakīm* was a wise physician who treated physical, mental, and spiritual illnesses.

Wisdom, in Islam, is often defined as the right thing, at the right place, at the right time. Hence, a *ḥakīm* – as Ibn al-ʿArabī puts it – is "He who does what is appropriate, for what is appropriate, as is appropriate".[2] Abū Bakr Warrāq extends the idea and differentiates between the theorist, the practical man (the *ḥakīm*), and the mystic:

> The scholar *(ʿālim)* falls short of what he teaches; the sage *(ḥakīm)* practises what he preaches; and the gnostic *(ʿārif)* and the realizer *(muḥaqqiq)* go beyond their speech.
>
> *Abū Bakr Warrāq, in Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyah 229, TSAA pp.262–63, in SSE6 p.72*

Rūmī relates a story to show that the sage of this world is lacking in true spiritual wisdom. In this instance, the *ḥakīm* is the worldly sage or intellectual philosopher:

> A certain desert Arab loaded a camel with two big sacks –
> one full of grain, with himself seated between the two.
> A glib philosopher (*lit.* a slinger of discourse) questioned him.
> He asked him about his native land and led him to talk,
> and said many fine things in the course of his enquiry.
> After some time, he asked him, "What are those two sacks filled with?
> Tell (me) the truth of the matter."

The Arab replied, “In one sack I have wheat;
in the other is some sand – not food for men.”
“Why,” asked the philosopher, “did you load this sand?”
“To balance the other sack,” said the Arab.
“For wisdom’s sake,” said the philosopher,
“pour half the wheat of that pannier into the other,
so that the sacks may be lightened, and the camel too.”

The Arab cried, “Bravo! O clever and noble sage *(ḥakīm)!*
Such subtle thought and excellent judgment!
And you so naked, journeying on foot and in fatigue!”
The good man took pity on the philosopher
and resolved to mount him on his camel.

The Arab said to the philosopher, “O fair-spoken sage *(ḥakīm),*
tell me a little about your own circumstances as well.
With such intelligence and talent as you have,
are you a vizier or a king? Tell me the truth.”
The philosopher answered, “I am neither – I am of the common folk.
Just look at my appearance and dress.”

The Arab persisted, “How many camels have you? How many oxen?”
“I have neither these nor those,” replied the philosopher,
“do not dig at me.”
“At any rate,” the Arab continued,
“What goods have you in your shop?”
The philosopher answered, “What shop, and what dwelling-place?”

“Then,” said the Arab, “I will ask about money.
How much do you have? –
For you are a solitary wanderer and one whose counsel is prized.
With you is the elixir
that changes the copper of the world into gold:
Your understanding and knowledge are inlaid with pearls.”

“By God,” he replied, “O chief of the Arabs, in my whole property
I have not the means to buy food for the night.
I run about with bare feet and naked body.
If anyone will give me a loaf of bread – that’s where I go.
From this wisdom and learning and cleverness,
I have received nothing but fantasy and headache.”

Then the Arab said to him, “Begone far from my side,
so that your bad luck may not rain upon me.

Take far away from me that unlucky wisdom of yours:
your speech is unlucky for all the people of the time.
Either go you in that direction, and I will run in this direction;
or if your way be forwards, I will go back.
One sack of wheat and the other of sand
is better for me than these vain contrivings.
My foolishness is a very blessed foolishness,
for my heart is full of grace and my soul is devout."

If you desire that misery should vanish,
endeavour that wisdom *(ḥikmat)* may vanish from you –
The wisdom *(ḥikmat)* which is born of (human) nature and fantasy,
the wisdom *(ḥikmat)* that lacks the overflowing grace
of the light of the Glorious One.
The wisdom *(ḥikmat)* of this world increases speculation and doubt:
spiritual wisdom *(ḥikmat)* soars above the sky.

*Rūmī, Maśnavī II:3176–203; cf. MJR2 pp.386–87*

See also: **ʿāqil**.

1. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* III:3750; *cf. MJR4* p.210.
2. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Meccan Revelations* 2:163.26, *FMIA2* (2:88) p.245; *cf. SPK* p.174.

**haku** (Hw) *Lit.* facilitator in the ancient, problem-solving process known as *hoʻoponopono,* the practice of gathering family members in a circle to express their feelings and make everyone feel *pono* (right).

In ancient Hawaii, the *haku* was usually a male member of the healing professional class, known as a *kahuna.* Today, a *haku* is most often a respected elder who is not involved in the issues that have given rise to the calling of a *hoʻoponopono.* The *haku* plays a vital role in setting the tone of *aloha* – of love, affection and recognition of the Divine in everything and everybody – the spirit that ties the family together.

See also: **aloha** (▸4), **hoʻoponopono** (▸4), **kahuna**.

**ḥasid** (He) *Lit.* pious, godly, holy, devout, kind; saint, pietist, devotee; a holy, godly, or devout person; a lover of God; a generic term for a pious and spiritually minded person; more specifically, in Jewish mysticism, a follower of a spiritual path and master. The fundamental characteristic of a *ḥasid* is sincere devotion to the spiritual path.

There have been a number of mystical movements in Judaism in which the spiritual masters and their disciples were both called *ḥasidim.* In many instances, there is no clear demarcation between the two, since the mystics interacted in fellowships or brotherhoods and it is not always clear to historians who were the disciples and who were the masters.

*Ḥasid* appears in several biblical texts,[1] both as an adjective and a noun. Its most frequent occurrence is in the psalms, where it is a general term for a holy and devout person:[2]

> Sing unto the Lord, O saints *(ḥasid),*
> and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness *(kodesh).*
>
> *Psalms 30:4; cf. KJV*

> O love the Lord, all you saints *(ḥasid),*
> for the Lord protects the faithful,
> and repays the proud with interest.
>
> *Psalms 31:23; cf. JB, KJV*

> Depart from evil, and do good,
> and you will have an everlasting home.
> For *Yahweh* loves what is right,
> and never deserts the devout *(ḥasid).*
>
> *Psalms 37:27–28; cf. JB, KJV*

The first group known to have been specifically designated *ḥasidim* were the *ḥasidim rishonim* (early *ḥasidim*), who lived in second-century (BCE) Israel. Although they lived under Greek dominion, they adhered to their Jewish spiritual and religious practices:

> One should not begin to recite his prayers unless one is in a reverential frame of mind. The pious men of old *(ḥasidim rishonim)* used to wait (meditating) an hour before beginning to pray in order to be able to focus their thoughts on the heavenly Father.
>
> *Mishnah Berakhot 5:1, TBZB p.3*

Maimonides (1135–1204) was later to explain:

> Any prayer that is not done with concentration is not prayer.... And what is concentration? That he should turn his heart away from other thoughts, and see himself as though he were standing before the *Shekhinah* (divine presence); that is why he has to sit for a while before starting to pray, in order to focus his heart, and afterwards pray in tranquillity and with an attitude of supplication. And he should not

> pray as if he were carrying a burden.... That is also why he should sit for a while after praying, and then take his leave. The early *ḥasidim* would meditate *(shohin)* for an hour before praying, and an hour after praying, and they would extend the time of their prayers for an hour.
>
> *Moses Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Hilkhot Tefillah 4:15–16*

Many were regarded as spiritual adepts and wonderworkers. Rabbi Ḥaninah ben Dosa, considered the last of the early Hasidic miracle workers, was still active during the early Roman period. Stories about him reveal his saintly qualities and spiritual stature:

> Once he went to visit his master and, arriving early at the school, he stood in the doorway and announced: "Receive everyone with a friendly countenance." A Roman official came by and said, "Which one of you will carry me on his shoulder to his house and do for me all that I want?"
>
> Ḥaninah rose and offered himself, took him upon his shoulder to his house, brought him water, sat down in the dust, and asked the Roman, "Master, what is your wish, and what will my master have for dinner?"
>
> When he replied, "honey and nuts", Ḥaninah scurried in different directions, and brought the desired food.
>
> When the Roman threw the table to the ground, Ḥaninah asked: "Master, kindly tell me your wish."
>
> When he replied, "Who will carry me to my house?" Ḥaninah again offered himself.
>
> When he came to the town market, he felt that the Roman had dismounted. He saw a flame rising to heaven and heard its voice say to him, "Ḥaninah, return, you have been tried and found perfect, We shall no longer trouble you, for I have heard it said of you, 'And I have put My words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand.'[3]"
>
> *Sefer Maʿasiyot, SMMG p.115ff.; cf. JPPB pp.90–91 (n.4)*

Ḥaninah is quoted in the *Pirkei Avot* ('Ethics of the Fathers'), a section of the *Mishnah* which presents the sayings of the early sages:

> He whose actions exceed his wisdom, his wisdom shall endure, but he whose wisdom exceeds his actions, his wisdom will not endure.
>
> *Pirkei Avot 3:12, in TBZB p.227*

Ḥaninah's total faith in God was the subject of legend. To him and his wife, the miraculous was natural. When they ran out of oil and his wife used vinegar instead, he said:

> He who commanded oil to burn will also command vinegar to burn.
>
> *Talmud, Mishnah Taʿanit 25a, in "Hasidim," Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD*

Despite his life of virtue, Ḥaninah was truly humble and saw himself as a sinner. He exemplified the qualities of the true *ḥasid.* Once he was bitten by a poisonous lizard, but it was the lizard that died. He brought it on his shoulder to the academy, commenting simply:

> See, my sons, it is not the lizard that kills, it is sin that kills.
>
> *Talmud, Mishnah Berakhot 33a, in "Hasidim," Encyclopedia Judaica, EJCD*

The true *ḥasid* was patient and always ready to forgive:

> There are four kinds of tempers among people. He who is easily injured and easily appeased: his loss is compensated by his gain; he who is hard to anger and hard to appease: his gain is cancelled in his loss; he who is hard to anger and easy to appease: he is a *ḥasid;* he who is easily angered and hard to appease is a wicked man.
>
> *Talmud, Mishnah Avot 5:14, in TBZB p.234*

Ḥaninah ben Dos was not the only one of the *ḥasidim* believed to have been capable of performing miracles. The Ḥoni ha-Meʿaggel ('the Circle Maker'), for instance, was said to have been a rainmaker:

> Ḥoni ha-Meʿaggel was a renowned pietist in the period of the Second Temple (C2nd BCE) who was said to have performed good deeds by using extraordinary powers of prayer or by performing miracles. According to popular legend, Ḥoni slept for seventy years and, on awakening, prayed for death rather than live in a strange world.
>
> The following story, which tells of his power to bring rain in times of drought, is recorded in many sources. His name, ha-Meʿaggel ('one who draws circles'), is usually taken to be connected with this incident, which is recounted in the *Talmud*:[4]
>
> > Once there was a terrible drought in the land of Israel. It was already the month of Adar, which usually marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of spring, but no rains had fallen all winter long. So the people sent for Ḥoni the Circle Maker. He prayed, but still no rains came. Then he drew a circle in the dust and stood in the middle of it. Raising his hands to heaven, he vowed, "God, I will not move from this circle until You send rain!"
> >
> > Immediately a few drops fell, hissing as they struck the hot white stones. But the people complained to Ḥoni, "This is but a

poor excuse for rain, only enough to release you from your vow." So Ḥoni turned back to heaven and cried, "Not for this trifling drizzle did I ask, but for enough rain to fill wells, cisterns, and ditches!"

Then the heavens opened up and poured down rain in buckets, each drop big enough to fill a soup ladle. The wells and the cisterns overflowed, and the wadis flooded the desert. The people of Jerusalem ran for safety to the Temple Mount.

"Ḥoni!" they cried. "Save us! Or we will all be destroyed like the generation of the Flood! Stop the rains!" Ḥoni said to them, "I was glad to ask God to end your misery, but how can I ask for an end to your blessing?"

The people pleaded with him, and he finally agreed to pray for the rain to stop. "Bring me an offering of thanksgiving," he told them, and they did. Then Ḥoni said to God, "This people that you brought out of Egypt can take neither too much evil nor too much good. Please give them what they ask, so that they may be happy." So God sent a strong wind that blew away the fierce rains, and the people gathered mushrooms and truffles on the Temple Mount.

Then Shimʿon ben Shetaḥ, head of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, said to Ḥoni, "I should excommunicate you for your audacity (for bothering the Almighty), but how can I, since you're Ḥoni! God coddles you as a father does his young child. The child says: 'Hold me, Daddy, and bathe me, and give me poppy seeds and peaches and pomegranates,' and his father gives him whatever he wants.' So it was with Ḥoni the Circle Maker.

*"The Story of Honi the Circle-Drawer," SHCD*

More than a millennium later, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, during the great medieval flourishing of mysticism that seems to have encompassed all major spiritual traditions, a Jewish mystical movement arose as a result of Sufi influence on mystical Judaism in Egypt and Spain. Their masters and disciples were also known as *ḥasidim.* Prominent among this group was the Arabic-speaking Jewish philosopher and mystic Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), together with his son Abraham (1186–1237) and grandson ʿObadyah (1228–1265). Contemporaneously, the Kabbalah (a movement that emerged in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France and Spain) was exerting its own influence in other spheres of Jewish mysticism. These early kabbalists were also called *ḥasidim.*

Knowledge of this phase of Jewish mysticism has been greatly enhanced by a study of ancient manuscripts discovered in 1896 in the attic *genizah*

(archive, repository) of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo. Traditionally, a *genizah* is a storeroom where religious manuscripts, containing defects such as scribal errors, are stored while awaiting ritual burial. In practice, more than religious manuscripts often get stored there, and in the Cairo *genizah* over 200,000 manuscripts and fragments, written mostly on vellum and paper were discovered, covering practically all aspects of Jewish life, secular as well as religious and spiritual. Among these documents were Muslim and Sufi texts, written in Arabic script, that had belonged to Jews, together with specifically Jewish texts originating from the circle of medieval *ḥasidim.* These documents included letters, mystical prayers, definitions of spiritual states and ethical manuals, together with works by Abraham Maimonides, and possibly some mystical works of Moses Maimonides himself. The discovery of this material indicated a mutual interaction and communication between the Sufis and the Jewish *ḥasidim* of that time.

One of the authors of that period, whose treatise *Maqālāt Derekh ha-Ḥasidut* was found in the *genizah,* gives three possible derivations of *ḥasid.* Firstly, he suggests, it may derive from *ḥesed ve-emet* (piety and truth). *Ḥesed* actually means grace, love, and devotion – piety in the sense of devotion, not of moral righteousness, as it is commonly translated in modern times.

Secondly, it may be connected with a secondary meaning of *ḥesed,* 'contempt', since *ḥasid* implies contempt for the world in the search for spiritual enlightenment.

Thirdly, it may imply *ḥasidah,* the stork, which (according to the author) shuns the corruption of worldly life, and seeks the solitude of its master's company.[5] Another interpretation as to why the stork is called the *ḥasidah* was offered by Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk, commonly known as the Kotzker Rebbe (1787–1859), a well-known Hasidic rabbi. Kotzker Rebbe taught that the reason the stork is called a *ḥasidah* is that "if one stork sees another who is sick or injured, the stork will go out of its way to forage for food, and transfer that food from its own beak directly into the beak of the stork in need. We humans should be such *ḥasidim,* such righteous loving-kind ones as the *ḥasidah*-stork!"[6]

The epithet *he-ḥasid* (the pious one) appears in many documents found in the Cairo *genizah,* where it implies a higher degree of spiritual attainment than mere outward religious piety.[7] For example, one of the leaders of the Jewish Sufi movement, who was believed to have been of great spiritual attainment, was known as Rabbi Abraham he-Ḥasid (*d.*1223). Abraham Maimonides referred to him as "our master in the path of the Lord."[8] Abraham he-Ḥasid referred to the pietists as *mevakshei ha-Shem* (those who seek the Name), which is roughly equivalent to the Sufi term *ṭālib* (seeker). In his *Book of Direction for the Duties of the Heart,* Baḥya ibn Pakuda, an early-eleventh-century Jewish philosopher, ethicist and rabbi, also used the term *ḥasid* for the highest expression of devotion – that of prophets and saints. His book is still read by many devout Jews.

Abraham Maimonides believed that the *ḥasidim* of Egypt were restoring the 'prophetic light', the mystic teachings and spiritual methods formerly practised by the prophets of ancient Israel, but which had become lost and had recently reappeared among the Muslim mystics. Often the *ḥasidim* referred to themselves as disciples of the prophets. They believed that the teaching had first been revealed to Adam, and that it was later transmitted to the Jewish patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Following the patriarchs, so they believed, it had been lost for several generations until it was restored to Moses, who in turn revealed it to the people of Israel. Much later, it was lost again, but had recently been revived.[9]

The end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century also saw the rise of the German *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz,* a community comprising a number of Jewish devotional groups who followed mystical practices, emphasizing devotion, spiritual inwardness, and personal experience of God. The *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* grew out of an earlier German Jewish tradition, in which mystical truths were transmitted orally and secretly, from rabbi to disciple.[10]

As both a term and an epithet, *ḥasid* has been used throughout the history of Jewish devotional mysticism. In eighteenth-century Jerusalem, the leader of the *Bet-El* ('House of God') community of kabbalists, was called the Rav he-Ḥasid ('Holy Rabbi'). His disciples were called *mekavenim* (those who concentrate or meditate). The group practised a spiritual way of life, including a form of silent, wordless prayer or meditation. They also practised the repetition of certain prayers or *kavanot* (concentration exercises), originated by Rabbi Isaac Luria, and based on the *Zohar* and other kabbalistic works. Ariel Bension, a descendent of one of the later members of the circle, relates:

> In *Bet-El,* joy was attained by no artificial means, but by silent meditation, by introspection in an atmosphere in which music, blending with men's thoughts, induced a forgetfulness of externals. Each man's eyes were turned inwards. Seeking to mine the wealth of his own soul, he found there the soul of the universe. Amazed at his own discovery of this hidden treasure, the mystic pursues his course upwards until he attains the ecstasy that brings him to the mystery of creation, where sits Joy enthroned. In a silence in which alone the soul may meet its God, destroyed worlds are reconstructed and restored to their pristine perfection. And this is the aim of the *kavanot* – the meditation on the mystic meaning of a certain prayer with intention to bring restoration.
>
> In a song which follows the meaningful word, continuing and deepening its meaning – even as a pause in the rendition of a symphony is but the continuation of the music – this wordless song attains that which cannot be reached through the medium of words. And the word of prayer, arising at a given moment from the throats of all Israel, attains its highest form in the silence of *Bet-El,* imaged in song by the

> master seated on his divan and surrounded by silent, thought-inspired mystics.
>
> *Ariel Bension, Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain, ZMSB pp.243–44*

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Poland witnessed the rise of the most well-known group to bear the name of *ḥasidim.* The master *(ẓaddik)* with whom this movement began, popularly known as Hasidism, is generally said to have been Rabbi Israel ben Eliʿezer (1698–1760), better known as the Baʿal Shem Tov ('Master of the Good Name'). Like many of the *ḥasidim* before him, his emphasis was on devotion and personal experience of God. In this East European flourishing of Hasidism, the *ẓaddik* (righteous or pious one) or *rebbe* (rabbi) was regarded as a holy man, a spiritual master with divine qualities, the incarnation of the divine will, a channel through whom the divine love could flow into humanity. The term *ḥasid* was applied both to those who had attained spiritual enlightenment – the *ẓaddik* or *rebbe* – as well as to their disciples. But in this movement, too, a clear distinction is found between the masters and their disciples *(ḥasidim),* whose devotion was directed towards God through their *rebbe.*

Among these latter-day *ḥasidim* and their masters, the experience of *devekut* (attaching oneself to God) was the goal of life, rather than knowledge or the study of scripture. Their *ẓaddikim* (masters) used evocative images of light, with a terminology derived from the Kabbalah as taught by the sixteenth-century Isaac Luria, to describe their spiritual yearning and their goal of liberating souls – the 'holy sparks' – from their imprisonment in the coarse matter of the world. It was believed that each *ẓaddik* had a certain number of 'sparks' or souls allotted to him for redemption.

The movement that began with the Baʿal Shem Tov persisted in Europe until its final communities were destroyed during the Nazi period, when at least half a million *ḥasidim* were murdered. After the war, the majority of survivors moved to Israel or America, where they established communities based upon the ones they had previously known. The spiritual impetus given by the Hasidic masters had a profound influence on the Jewish community, and more than a few Hasidic groups still exist today. In fact, *Ḥabad* Hasidism, which began in Russia in 1775, is the largest Jewish religious group of modern times.

See also: **devekut** (▸4), **ḥasid** (▸4), **Hasidism** (1.4), **ẓaddik**.

1. *Deuteronomy* 33:8, *1 Samuel* 2:9; *2 Samuel* 22:26; *2 Chronicles* 6:41.
2. See also *Psalms* 4:3, 12:1, 16:10, 18:25, 32:6, 50:5, 79:2, 85:8, 86:2, 89:19, 97:10, 116:15, 132:9, 132:16, 145:10, 17, *KJV.*
3. *Isaiah* 51:16.
4. *Mishnah, Taʿanit* 3:8.

5. See Paul Fenton, *Treatise of the Pool, TOP* p.6.
6. Fred Dobb, "Peace Parsha," *PPPS.*
7. See Paul Fenton, *Treatise of the Pool, TOP* p.6.
8. ʻObadyah Maimonides, *Treatise of the Pool, TOP* pp.5–7.
9. See Paul Fenton, *Treatise of the Pool, TOP* pp.8–10.
10. See Miriam Caravella, *Mystic Heart of Judaism, MHJC* pp.239–58.

**healer** See **physician**.

**helmsman**, **pilot** (Gk. *kubernētēs*) One who guides or steers a ship; a steersman; metaphorically, anything that guides or steers, such as the mind, the soul, reason, *etc.;* mystically, God, the divine Word *(Logos)* or Spirit *(Nous),* a master or saviour; a part of a family of metaphors centring around the imagery of this world as a stormy sea, the soul as a rudderless ship, and God, the Word or a saviour as the helmsman or pilot who steers the ship to the safe port and harbour of the Word, and ultimately to the eternal realm. The Greek *kubernētēs* is also translated as 'guide'.

The metaphor is used by Plato for the higher, divine part of a human being that rules the lower passions and senses. Here, perhaps confusingly, the soul *(psychē)* is the whole being of a man, while spirit *(nous)* is his higher noetic or spiritual part. Sometimes, *nous* is translated as 'mind' or 'intellect', terms that add further to the confusion:

> Now, of this realm beyond the heavens, no earthly poet has sung or ever will sing in such strains as it deserves. But I will tell of it, for I must dare to speak the truth, especially since my discourse is on truth. For it is there that the colourless, formless, intangible, truly existent Being *(Ousia)* dwells – visible only to the spirit *(nous),* the pilot *(kubernētēs)* of the soul *(psychē);* It is the Source of all true knowledge.
>
> *Plato, Phaedrus 247c*

Plato is relating a well-known parable in which he likens the divine and immortal part of a human being to a charioteer who drives two horses. One is ugly and recalcitrant, signifying the lower desires and passions; the other is noble and obedient, "a friend of temperance and modesty", who needs no whip. The gods, on the other hand, are like charioteers who drive two well-bred and obedient horses:

> Let us liken the soul to the combination of a winged charioteer and his pair of winged steeds. Now the horses and charioteers of the gods

> are all noble, and come of noble stock, but ours are mixed. And the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair of horses: one of these horses is noble and of noble stock, while the other is the opposite in every way. Therefore, the task of the charioteer is necessarily difficult and troublesome.
>
> *Plato, Phaedrus 246a–b*

Plato's imagery echoes throughout all subsequent mystical literature of classical times, where the *nous* is taken to mean either human reason, or the higher spiritual aspect of a human being, or the divine *Nous,* the divine Spirit or Intelligence, also known as the *Logos* (Word).

Thus, the fourth-century (BCE) Platonist Xenocratēs identified the *nous* with the inner *daimōn* (the *psychē* as the particle of God within).[1] Six centuries later, Marcus Aurelius followed suit:

> Live with the gods! He lives in the company of the gods who hides nothing from them and shows them a man happy with his fate and eager to obey the *daimōn,* the particle of God whom God has given to every man as his ruler and guide, namely *Nous* and *Logos* which reside in everyone.
>
> *Meditations 5:27; cf. EHTM p.61*

In modern terminology, the *nous* or inner *daimōn,* is the immortal soul or spirit, a particle of both God and the divine Word *(Logos)* or Spirit *(Nous).*

To the first-century Greek-speaking Alexandrian Jew Philo Judaeus, in a well-controlled human being, mind and reason are the helmsmen, ruling the senses and maintaining order in the house:

> When mind *(nous),* the charioteer or helmsman *(kubernētēs)* of the soul, rules the whole creature, as a governor does a city, life holds to a straight course. But when the irrational senses obtain supremacy, a terrible confusion overtakes the man, as happens when slaves rise up against their masters.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, Allegorical Interpretation 3:79; cf. PCW1 pp.452–53, WPJ1 p.167*

But the ruler over all, says Philo, is the "divine Word *(Logos),* which is the helmsman *(kubernētēs)* and governor of the universe".[2]

Alluding to the many examples given by Plato and other mystics, an unknown first-century (CE) writer portrays God Himself as the helmsman, charioteer, choir leader, lawgiver, and military commander:

> In a word, then, as the helmsman *(kubernētēs)* in his ship, as the charioteer in his chariot, as the leader in a chorus, as the lawgiver

> in a city, a the commander in a military camp, so is God in the cosmos.... He is established in the immovable, and moves and directs all things as and where He wishes among the varieties of form and nature.
>
> *Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Cosmos 6:400b, SCC pp.402–3*

To the gnostic writer of the *Teachings of Silvanus,* the true Helmsman is again the divine *Nous.* But the worldly man is all adrift, since he does not receive spiritual direction from that source:

> He swims in the desires of life and has foundered. To be sure, he thinks that he finds profit when he does all those things that are without profit. The wretched man who goes through all these things will die because he does not have the *Nous,* the Helmsman. He is like a ship that the wind tosses to and fro, like a loose horse that has no rider.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 90; cf. TS pp.24–25*

The helmsman or pilot as an epithet for the saviour is frequently found in Manichaean texts, in association – expressed or implied – with the common Manichaean imagery of the soul being carried safely in a ship of light, across the stormy waters of the world, and back to God. Hence, the saviours are sometimes described as the "helmsmen of light".[3] In a hymn of praise to Mānī, he is the "benign and blessed helmsman":

> Behold, the illuminator of hearts has come,
> the lamp of light that illuminates even those in darkness!
> Behold, he who is the true resurrector of the dead has come,
> he who cures illness....
> Behold, the valiant, benign and blessed helmsman has come,
> he who himself steers the ship across the ocean.
>
> *Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.322ff., RMP cl; cf. GSR pp.84–85, ML p.52*

And alluding to a number of metaphors and parables, Mānī is also:

> Father whose sons are many,
> watcher that guards his tower,
> shepherd unsleeping,
> helmsman that is not drunken,
> king, the God of Truth,
> wearer of the unfading crown.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB p.136*

In another verse, it is Jesus who is addressed as:

> Our helmsman, . . . our primal guide,
> you are our shepherd that feeds us.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCXXIV; cf. MPB p.13*

In essence, as Mānī and many other mystics have maintained, the real master or saviour is the power within, the "pure Word", as a Manichaean text attributed to Mānī affirms:

> The pure Word . . . is the pilot for the soul in the body. Through it (the pure Word), fully know that the false word that leads to the hell of darkness is a pilot of hell.
> *Manichaean Text, MM3 p.873ff., RMP az; cf. GSR p.48, ML p.48*

See also: **reincarnation and transmigration** (**in ancient Greek philosophy**) (6.3), **storm** (6.2).

1. Xenocratēs, *Fragment* 81 *(DLSF).*
2. Philo Judaeus, *On the Cherubim* 11, *WPJ1* p.184.
3. *Manichaean Psalm Book, MPB* p.139.

**helper**, **helpful one** One who assists others in any way; mystically, an epithet of God or the saviour. In the Hebrew Bible, the helper is God:

> But joy and gladness for all who seek You!
> To all who love Your saving Power
> give constant cause to say, "God is great!"
> To me, poor wretch, come quickly, God!
> My helper, my saviour, *Yahweh,* come without delay!
> *Psalms 40:16–17, 70:4–5, JB*

In Christianity and gnosticism, the helper is also a master or saviour. A master helps a soul in many ways. Outwardly, he can give counsel and instruction; his physical presence is also spiritually uplifting and inspiring. Inwardly, the real saviour and real helper of the soul is the Word or creative power, who is the essence of the soul, and is always there to help and guide in hidden ways. Because a master has no karmic burden of his own, only he is in a position to truly help another soul. All others, however well-intended they may be, are constrained by their own burden. Their sphere of help is also limited to this world and to this life only, while the help of a saviour continues after death,

and goes on until the soul returns to God. As the early Christian Clement of Alexandria says:

> Let us haste, let us run, my brethren, who are God-loving and God-like images of the Word.... Let us aspire after what is good; let us become God-loving men, and obtain the greatest of all things which are incapable of being harmed – God and life. Our helper is the Word; let us put confidence in Him; and never let us be visited with such a craving for silver and gold and glory, as for the Word of Truth himself.
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen 12; cf. WCA1 pp.108–9*

This is also why, in the *Acts of Thomas,* Judas Thomas praises Jesus as the "helper" who awakens or raises from death those who are spiritually asleep or dead – lost in the illusion of material existence:

> Glory to you, defender and helper
> of them that come into your refuge!
> Who sleeps not, and awakens those who are asleep.
> Who lives, and gives life to those who lie in death!
>
> O God, Jesu Christ, Son of the living God,
> redeemer and helper, refuge and rest
> of all those who are weary in your work;
> Giver of healing to those who for your name's sake
> bear the burden and the heat of the day.
>
> *Acts of Thomas 60; cf. ANT p.393*

In later Christian times, Christ is again the inner, divine helper, understood by many as the divine Word:

> Give to Christ, therefore, free entrance into your heart, and keep out all things that withstand his entrance. When you have him, you are rich enough, and he alone will be sufficient to you. Then he will be your provider and defender and your faithful helper in every necessity, so that you will not need to put your trust in any other save Him.
>
> *Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ 2:1, IC pp.75–76*

Likewise, in the gnostic *Teachings of Silvanus,* a text that specifically identifies Christ as the Word,[1] Christ is described as "king", "father", "teacher", and "helper":

> Accept Christ, who is able to set you free.... For this king whom you have is forever invincible, against whom no one will be able to fight

> nor say a word. This is your king and your father, for there is no one like him. The divine teacher is with you always. He is a helper, and he meets you because of the good that is in you.
>
> *Teachings of Silvanus 96; cf. TS pp.36–37*

The epithet is also used in a number of places by the unknown writer of the *Odes of Solomon,* where the meaning is clear:

> My joy is the Lord, and my course is to Him:
> this my path is beautiful.
> For I have a helper to the Lord.
> He made himself known to me,
> without grudging, in his generosity:
> For in his kindness, he set aside his majesty.
> He became like me,
> in order that I might accept him.
> In appearance, he seemed like me,
> that I might be clothed in him.
> And I did not tremble when I saw him,
> because he had compassion for me.
> He became like my nature,
> that I might come to know him;
> And like my form,
> that I might not turn away from him.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 7:2–6, OSD p.30*

And again:

> I raised my arms to the Height,
> on account of the grace of the Lord.
> For He has cast my bonds away from me,
> and my helper in his grace has raised me up,
> to partake of his salvation.
> And I put off darkness
> and clothed myself with light.
> And my soul acquired members,
> free from sickness, suffering, or distress.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 21:1–4, OSD p.94*

The writer of the *Odes* also makes little distinction between the saviour and the Creative Word, which he calls by a number of names, including the Jewish term, the “Right Hand”:

For the Right Hand of the Lord is with you,
and will be your helper.
*Odes of Solomon 8:6, OSD p.38*

And:

I was rescued from my bonds,
and unto Thee, my God, I fled;
For Thou art the Right Hand of my deliverance,
and my helper.
*Odes of Solomon 25:1–2, OSD p.114*

The saviour as the soul's "helper" is a metaphor that also appears in Manichaean texts, where Mānī and Jesus are the two most commonly mentioned saviours. The Coptic psalms invoke the help of the saviour: "Jesus my helper, give me Your Right Hand,"[2] and "Victory to you, my saviour, helper of souls."[3] In the hymns from Chinese Turkestan, Mānī is the saviour and "helpful one" who leads souls back to their eternal home:

From the gods has come Lord (Mānī),
the god with the dear name;
To paradise he leads us up
to where the wind brings forth sweet scent.
God, the righteous one, has come from the paradise of light,
the helpful one, the truly powerful one.
*Manichaean Hymns, HR2 p.92ff.; cf. ML pp.52–53*

Because the saviour is himself "liberated", he is in a position to help other souls:

Come in peace, liberated sovereign!
Come with help, good spirit, messenger of peace!
Helper of the meek, conqueror of aggressors!
*Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.312ff., RMP bt; cf. GSR p.65, MM p.87, ML p.107*

Among the Mandaean texts, the saviour, guide and helper is again the divine Word, portrayed as the Son who is sent by God ("Life") as a man to this world to build a community of souls, and return with them to the "everlasting abode":

Praises, praises to the Ancient, the First,
to the Son of the great Primal Life,
whom Life called, prepared, armed,
and sent forth to the generations.

You came and opened a door,
you levelled a road and trod out a path,
set up a boundary stone,
and knitted together a community.
You were helper, saviour, and guide
for the Father of the great family of Life,
and knitted it together in a communion of Life,
built it into a great building of sound construction,
and brought it forth to the great place of light
and the everlasting abode.

*Mandaean Prayer Book 76; cf. CPM p.79*

Those souls who remain steadfast, the helper will guide from this world ("the place of darkness") back to the Divine ("the place of light"):

My brethren, hold firmly to your staves
and endure the world's persecution.
The world's persecution endure
with a true and believing heart.
Worship Me with uprightness, and I will act as your helper,
a helper and support from the place of darkness
to the place of light.

*Mandaean Prayer Book 129, CPM p.121*

He will also be there for them when they die:

If you are vigilant, my brethren,
when you depart from your bodies,
I will be a helper to you –
A helper and a support from the place of darkness
to the place of light.

*Mandaean Prayer Book 125; cf. CPM p.119*

See also: **saviour**.

1. *Teachings of Silvanus* 106, *TS* pp.56–57.
2. *Manichaean Psalm Book* CCLXXIV, *MPB* p.94.
3. *Psalms of Heracleidēs, Manichaean Psalm Book* CCLXXVII, *MPB* p.98.

**herald** (Gk. *keryx*) A forerunner, a harbinger, a messenger; one who announces important news; in religion and mysticism, an angel, such as Gabriel, the messenger or herald of God, or the angel said to herald the Day of Judgment

with a trumpet blast; a master or saviour; in Christianity, John the Baptist, believed to be the forerunner of the messiah, as prophesied by Isaiah;[1] also, occasionally, the apostles of Jesus, heralding the message of Jesus to the world; in Greek mythology, *Hermēs,* messenger and herald of the gods, sometimes depicted with a herald's staff, and interpreted in gnostic and Hermetic texts as the divine *Nous* (Mind, Intelligence) or *Logos* (Word); in Roman mythology, Mercury.

A Hermetic text (*c.*C2nd–3rd CE), for instance, describes how God sent down the *Nous* (divine Mind or Intelligence, the creative power), "joining a herald to it" – that is, incarnated as a human being who could give the message to humankind:

> He filled a mighty bowl with the *Nous,* and sent it down, joining a herald to it, whom He commanded to make this proclamation to the hearts of men: "Those hearts that are able, baptize (*lit.* immerse) yourself with the baptism of this bowl – you who have faith that you can ascend to Him that has sent down the bowl; and if you who know the purpose for which you have come into being."
>
> Then as many as understood these tidings and were baptized in the *Nous,* became partakers in *gnōsis* and, having received the *Nous,* became perfect men.
>
> But those who do not understand these tidings, because they possess the aid of reason only, and have not received the *Nous,* are ignorant of why they have come into being or by what means. The senses of such men are like irrational creatures; and as their entire being is focused in their feelings and their impulses, they fail to appreciate those things that are really worthy of consideration. They centre all their thoughts upon the pleasures of the body and its desires, believing that man has come into being for its sake.
>
> *Hermetica 4:4–5; cf. HAG pp.61–62, HGCH pp.15–16, TGH2 pp.86–87*

See also: **apostle**, **Hermetic Literature** (1.9), **messenger**.

1. *Mark* 1:2–3, *Matthew* 3:3, *Luke* 3:4–6, *John* 1:15–23, *Isaiah* 40:3*ff.*

**hermeticist** One who follows the teaching ascribed to the mythical Hermēs Trismegistos in the Hermetic literature. See **Hermetic Literature** (1.9).

**hermit** (Gk. *ēremitēs,* L. *eremita*) A monk or religious person, man or woman, who lives in solitude; a religious recluse, a solitary, an eremite; in medieval times, a religious person living in solitude, and licensed by the bishop of

the diocese as a 'consecrated hermit', often undertaking some service in the community; a religious person unattached to any particular religious order and following no rule. The tradition of the licensed and consecrated hermit still exists in both the contemporary Roman Catholic Church and many parts of the Anglican Church.

The English 'hermit' usually refers to those of the Christian tradition, though all mystical traditions include those who seek a solitary life in quest of the Divine and of enlightenment. The term has often been used interchangeably with 'anchorite', although a hermit was originally understood as someone who retired to the wilderness, while an anchorite chose a populated place. In medieval times, anchorites were 'enclosed' for life in their anchorage, though this did not preclude them from receiving regular visitors, having servants, and so on.

The Greek *ēremitēs* (desert dweller) comes from *ēremia* (desert), which in turn comes from *ēremos* (lonely). The term refers to the practice of withdrawal to the solitude of the desert in search of God, a practice which preceded Christianity. The first Christian hermits of renown were St Antony the Great (251–356) and before him the less well-known St Paul of Thebes, who is said to have lived in a cave to the age of 113. Following St Antony, many of the desert fathers of Egypt lived as hermits, yet as part of a community, or attached to a monastery, to which they would return from time to time or as need demanded. In later times, monasteries and convents also made provision for the solitary type, who would live nearby or within the enclosure, as a member of the order, conforming to its rule, and following its observances so far as practical.

In medieval Europe,[1] hermits – almost invariably men – would live in a dwelling associated with a church, a monastery or a convent, or on the estate of a rich patron. Unlike an anchorite, a hermit was not confined to his dwelling, but could roam about at will. He could even move from house to house, although this was generally discouraged and could lead to ecclesiastical disapproval or even the revoking of his licence. Hermits would frequently engage in charitable or other works, and were often an essential part of the community, recognized as the local charitable odd-jobman. Hermits of a practical bent would mend roads, guard the town gates, care for lepers in lazar houses, act as guides to travellers, and even become unofficial lighthouse keepers before the days of a recognized lighthouse service. Those who were so suited became spiritual counsellors, either in person or by correspondence.

It seems that a hermit could even marry, apparently without prejudice to his situation, though the terms of a hermit's licence normally stipulated a chaste life. But all in all, their primary activity was a life of interior prayer and of counselling others, though this did not necessarily imply a life with little human contact. They were dependent for their livelihood on the charity of others, which in medieval times would not have been lacking.

There are still a very small number of anchorites and hermits attached to the Catholic Church. But while modern reactions are likely to be those of surprise and amused or condescending tolerance, founded upon lack of understanding, the medieval world would have known what it was all about. The religious or spiritual ideals of the secluded life, and the benefits to the local community were understood, as was the principle of dedicating one's life to God.

The motivations for seeking a hermit's life were many and various. Some were entirely moved by the quest for God; perhaps a priest after years of ministering to a community might feel the urge to seek perfection for himself. Some might take to a hermit's life as a temporary retreat, to recharge their spiritual being. For some, it might be as a protest or as an example to others, to urge them to adopt a better life. Others may have been racked with guilt over past misdeeds, and have needed some way of coming to terms with it.

There were also social reasons that prompted people to seek refuge from the world. Medieval life could be unbearably claustrophobic. Houses and communities were small, and grouped close together. An entire family would often sleep in one room; beds, if available, could hold up to six people. The possible scenarios were wide-ranging, and in certain cases, the close and constant pressure of human contact would have been sufficient to drive a person into a religious life of at least semi-seclusion. By comparison, it may not have been a bad sort of life. Even churches were often more like social hubs than places of peace and quiet. Public meetings, judicial courts, stage plays, and even fairs were held inside the church or within its enclosure. In the fourteenth century, there hundreds of hermits and anchorites in England alone. According to records, Winchester had six recluses in 1259, Lincoln had two in 1392, and there were at least eight in London at around the same time. The wealthy might leave endowments to support anchorages and hermitages of their choice.

Among the most well-known English hermit of medieval times was the Yorkshireman Richard Rolle (*c.*1300–1349), author of *The Fire of Love,* who adopted the life of a solitary from an early age. Rolle went to Oxford University, but left without completing his degree because of the constant intellectual argumentation he encountered. Back in Yorkshire, in an oft-told story, he left home, fashioning a hermit's habit from two of his sister's frocks and his father's rain hood. The following day, he found patronage as a hermit on the estate of John de Dalton, Constable of Pickering Castle, later moving to other hermitages, and probably leading a wandering life. He won much admiration, but his testy nature and criticism of the clergy also aroused opposition. It seems that although he never became a licensed hermit, he remained in contact with a number of northern religious communities, becoming spiritual adviser to the nuns of Hampole, in south Yorkshire, where he died.

His espousal of the hermit's life is unequivocal. As he says: "A hermit's life is a great one if it is greatly lived!"[2] He maintains, however, that the hermit is not so much a world hater, as a God lover:

> Righteous hermits have but a single purpose: they live in the love of God and their neighbour; they despise worldly praise; they avoid human company as much as they can; they consider all men more worthy than themselves; they give their minds continually to devotion; they hate idleness; they manfully withstand the pleasures of the flesh; they savour and ardently seek heavenly things; they abandon earthly things, having no desire for them; and they find delight in the sweetness of prayer.
>
> *Richard Rolle, Fire of Love 13; cf. FLML (1:13) p.60, FLRR p.83*

See also: **monk**, **solitary**.

1. See Clifton Walters, *The Fire of Love, FLRR* pp.16–21.
2. Richard Rolle, *Fire of Love* 13, *FLRR* p.84.

**hesychast** (Gk. *hēsychastēs,* L. *hesychasta*) From the Greek *hēsychazein* (to be tranquil), and related to *hēsychos* (quiet, still) and *hēsychia* (quietness, stillness); a monk of the Orthodox mystical tradition, dating back to the third century; sometimes used for a member of the mystical school originating at the Greek Orthodox monastery of Mount Athos during the fourteenth century, which spread widely into neighbouring countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia. In fact, the monks of Mount Athos did not so much found a new school as breathe new life into an old one, originating with the early desert fathers. Many of the hesychast practices, especially that of unceasing prayer, and particularly the Jesus prayer, are mentioned in pre-ninth-century texts, collected together in the *Philokalia.*

The goal of the hesychast is not simply silence and stillness, but an attitude of listening to God, and of openness to God, of permitting Him to fill the inner quietness with His presence.

One of the early hesychast texts, frequently quoted by later writers, is the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St John Klimakos (*c.*579–649). After entering the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai around 600, John Klimakos withdrew to the surrounding desert and the solitude of a hermit's life. Around 639, however, he was appointed abbot of the monastery.

Some passages from this book concerning the hesychast are paraphrased by Nikiphoros the Monk in the *Philokalia,* where the hesychast is described as one who seeks – diligently and with vigilance – the bodiless spirit in the "watchtower" within the body:

> A hesychast is one who strives to enshrine what is bodiless within the temple of the body, paradoxical though this may sound. A hesychast is one who says, "I sleep, but my heart is watchful".[1] Close the door of your cell to the body, the door of your tongue to speech, and your inner gate to evil spirits. Ascend into a watchtower – if you know how to – and observe how and when and whence, and in what numbers and what form, the robbers try to break in and steal your grapes.
>
> When the watchman grows weary he stands up and prays, then he sits down again and manfully resumes the same task. Guarding against evil thoughts is one thing, keeping watch over the intellect is another. The latter differs from the former as much as east from west, and is far more difficult to attain. Where thieves see royal weapons at the ready they do not attack the place lightly. Similarly, spiritual robbers do not lightly try to plunder the person who has enshrined prayer within his heart.[2]
>
> *John Klimakos, On Watchfulness, Philokalia, PCT4 p.200*

Gregory of Sinai lays out the fundamentals of hesychast practice:

> He who practises hesychasm must acquire the following five virtues as a foundation on which to build: silence, self-control, vigilance, humility, and patience.... From early morning the hesychast must devote himself to the remembrance of God through prayer and stillness of heart.
>
> *Gregory of Sinai, On Stillness and Prayer 99, Philokalia, PCT4 p.233*

Gregory also quotes John Klimakos, who observes that a hesychast is so aware of his inner condition that he feels he has 'fallen' when his mind – whether in prayer or otherwise – is distracted from its focus upon God:

> As St John Klimakos says, "One under monastic obedience falls when he follows his own will, while the hesychast falls when he is interrupted in his prayer."[3] For the hesychast commits adultery in his mind when he sunders it from its mindfulness of God: it is as if he were being unfaithful to his true spouse, and philandering with trivial matters.
>
> *Gregory of Sinai, On Stillness and Prayer 8, Philokalia; cf. PCT4 p.268*

Prayer, says Isaiah the Solitary, is the pilot that helps the hesychast navigate the storms of thought that assail him. But the prayer has to be focused:

> In storms and squalls, we need a pilot, and in this present life we need prayer; for we are susceptible to the provocations of our thoughts, both good and bad. If our thought is full of devotion and love of God,

> it rules over the passions. As hesychasts, we should discriminate between virtue and vice with discretion and watchfulness.... God will not accept from a hesychast a prayer that is turbid and careless.
>
> *Isaiah the Solitary, On Guarding the Mind 24, 26, Philokalia, PCT1 pp.27–28*

Nikitas Stithatos insists that the essence of a hesychast's practice is inner stillness:

> It is stillness, full of wisdom and benediction, that leads us to this holy and godlike state of perfection – when, that is, it is practised and pursued genuinely. If an apparent hesychast has not attained this eminence and perfection, his stillness is not yet this noetic (spiritual) and perfect stillness. Indeed, until he has attained this eminence, he will not even have stilled the inner turbulence of the anarchic passions. All he will have is a body consisting of teguments, vents and cavities, and wasted by a disordered and deluded mind.
>
> *Nikitas Stithatos, On Spiritual Knowledge 25, Philokalia, PCT4 p.146*

See also: **hēsychia** (▸3), **Jesus prayer** (▸3).

1. *Song of Songs* 5:2.
2. John Klimakos, *Ladder of Divine Ascent* 26–27, *PG88 col.*1097b, 1100a–b, 1029b, 1088a, *LDAC* pp.239–40, 258, 262, 263.
3. John Klimakos, *Ladder of Divine Ascent* 27, *PG88 col.*1112c, *LDAC* p.270.

**hierophant** (Gk. *hierophantēs*) A holy or divine revealer; holy teacher; from the Greek *hieros* (holy, divine) + *phainein* (to reveal); a spiritual guide or teacher of esoteric mysteries, especially in the mystery schools of ancient Egypt and Greece; the one who shows the sacred to the initiate; also, a high priest of ancient Greece, particularly one who officiated at the mysteries of Eleusis.

In the great mysteries, the hierophant was the sole expounder of the secrets to which the initiated were finally admitted. His appearance and dress had to be impeccable; he was to be mature, without visible defect, possessing a pleasant voice, and of pure character. After his election, he was not allowed to marry. As the author Paul Brunton observes:

> Only the supreme hierophants, themselves at one with their divinities, their wills blended with his, could by their astonishing divine force, arouse the candidate to consciousness of his superior nature. This was the noblest and most impressive revelation then possible to Egyptian man, and still possible, albeit through other ways, to modern man.
>
> *Paul Brunton, A Search in Secret Egypt, SSEB p.203*

The first-century Alexandrian Jew Philo Judaeus describes Moses as a "hierophant *(hierophantēs)* and prophet".[1] Interpreting *Exodus* allegorically, he explains how Moses became a *mystēs* (*lit.* an initiate, a mystic) and hierophant by stilling and entering into the darkness of his own mind:

> Moses, having pitched his tent outside the camp[2] – that is, outside the whole array of bodily things – that is to say, having made his mind firm so that it does not move, begins to worship God. And entering into the darkness, that unseen realm, dwells there, while he learns the secrets of the most sacred mysteries. And there he becomes, not merely a *mystēs,* but also a hierophant *(hierophantēs)* of revelations and a teacher of divine things, which he will impart to those whose ears are purified. Therefore, the divine Spirit is always at his side, guiding his every way aright.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Giants 12; cf. PCW2 pp.472–73, TGH1 pp.211–12, WPJ1 p.340*

At another place, he speaks of himself as an initiate of Moses, yet also willing to learn from later mystics, such as Jeremiah:

> If ever you meet with someone who has been initiated, cling to him affectionately and adhere to him, lest knowing some more recent mystery he should conceal it from you before you have learnt to comprehend it thoroughly.
>
> For I, having been initiated into the great mysteries by Moses, the friend of God, nevertheless when subsequently I set eyes upon Jeremiah the prophet, and learnt that he was not only a *mystēs,* but also an adept hierophant *(hierophantēs),* did not hesitate to become his disciple.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On the Cherubim 14; cf. PCW2 pp.36–37, TGH1 p.217, WPJ1 p.187*

Speaking of himself, Philo adds that the hierophant does not reveal his secrets to insincere intellectual quibblers:

> This is a divine mystery, and its lesson is for the initiated who are worthy to receive the holiest secret with all modesty, and practise true and genuine piety, free of pretentious ornament. For we will not be the hierophant *(hierophantēs)* to those who, under the deadly spell of vanity, measure sanctity and holiness by no other standard than barren words and quibbling expressions, and by such juggling tricks and ritual.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On the Cherubim 12; cf. PCW2 pp.34–35, WPJ1 pp.185–86*

The description of Moses as hierophant was not unique to Philo. His later compatriot, Clement of Alexandria, similarly depicts Moses as the

"hierophant *(hierophantēs)* of the Truth",[3] a designation that he also applies to the legendary Greek mystic, Orphēus.[4]

See also: **mystagogue**, **mysteries** (7.4), **mystic**.

1. Philo Judaeus, *Allegorical Interpretation* 3:60.
2. *Exodus* 33:7.
3. Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen* 2, *WCA1* p.34.
4. Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen* 7, *WCA1* p.73.

**high priest** (He. *kohen gadol,* Gk. *archiereus*) In Judaism, the highest ranking priest, whose privilege it was, once a year on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), to enter the holy of holies (inner sanctum) of the tabernacle in the Temple at Jerusalem. The ceremony involved the burning of incense and the sprinkling of sacrificial animal blood for the atonement of his own sins and those of the people of Israel. At that time, he wore garments of plain white linen, rather than the elaborate apparel worn for official services.

The high priest was in charge of all Temple administration and finances, and in the early part of the Second Temple period (516 BCE – 70 CE), he was also the political ruler of the nation. The position, first conferred on Aaron by his brother Moses, was hereditary and for life, although in the latter part of the Second Temple period, several high priests were chosen by government appointment or by lot. There were also several reappointments, occasioned by the discovery of bribery. Along with Temple worship, the position of high priest came to an end with the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

As a part of the consecration ceremony, kings and high priests were anointed with oil, symbolizing their appointment by *Yahweh,*[1] the practice giving rise to the term messiah ('anointed one'). In the psalms, the epithet is often used of David and his heirs, and it came to be used for the awaited messiah-king, of whom David was the exemplar. In the mysterious Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem, the high priest and the king come together in the anointed one, the messiah.[2] psalm 110 depicts the messiah as king and "priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek".[3] Hence, the messiah became known as the 'eternal priest'.

Philo Judaeus, the first-century Greek-speaking Jewish interpreter of the Bible, understood the true high priest as a symbol of the *Logos,* the divine Creative Word. As he says:

> We say that the high priest *(archiereus)* is not a man, but the divine Word *(Logos),* immune from all transgressions, intentional or involuntary.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Flight and Finding 20; cf. PCW5 pp.68–69, TGH1 p.227*

He goes on to give a symbolic interpretation of the anointing of the high priest and his elaborate garments, taking as his text, *Yahweh*'s instructions to Moses, according to *Leviticus,* with regard to the high priest.[4] The high priest "cannot be defiled", says Philo, because his "father" is the "divine Mind *(Nous)*" and his "mother" is "Wisdom *(Sophia),* through whom the universe came into existence", and because

> his head has been anointed with oil, by which I mean that his ruling faculty shines with a brilliant light, such that he is deemed worthy to put on his garments.
>
> Now, that most ancient Word *(Logos)* of Him that IS puts on the cosmos as His raiment – for He arrays himself in earth and water and air and fire, and all that comes forth from them. But the individual soul is clothed with the body, and the mind of a wise man is clothed with virtues.
>
> And "He will never take the mitre from his head" signifies that He will not lay aside the royal diadem, the symbol, not of an autocratic sovereign, but of an admirable viceroy.
>
> Nor "will He rend His garments" – for the Word *(Logos)* of Him that IS, being the bond of all things, . . . both holds and knits together all the parts, preventing them from being dissolved or separated.
>
> *Philo Judaeus, On Flight and Finding 20; cf. PCW5 pp.68–71, TGH1 p.228*

In another passage, Philo depicts the "holy garments" of the "high priest *(archiereus),* the *Logos,*" as possessing a "variegated beauty derived from powers", some of the spiritual realm and some of the material. Here, he is referring to the description of the *ephod* (probably a sort of apron, held in place with shoulder straps), breastplate, robe, embroidered tunic, headdress, girdle, and diadem, as detailed in *Exodus.*[5] The engraved plate of pure gold on the headdress, for example, symbolizes "the primal Principle behind all principles, by which God shaped or formed the universe"; and the pomegranates embroidered on the lower end of the robe, alternating with hanging bells made of pure gold, signify the things of the senses, of sight and hearing. Philo adds that the tinkling of the bells as the high priest enters the holy of holies represents the exultant soul as it enters the "truly holy place of the soul, the sacred place that only the spirit *(nous)* can apprehend".[6]

Around a hundred years later, the second-century Christian, Justin Martyr, interprets the twelve bells attached to the hem of the high priest's robe as

> a symbol of the twelve apostles, who depend on the power of Christ, the eternal priest; and through their voice it is that all the earth has been filled with the glory and grace of God and of His Christ.
>
> *Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 42, WJMA p.139*

In fact, *Exodus* makes no mention of the number of bells, and Justin Martyr probably confused them with the twelve gems, which are said to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.[7]

A number of early Christians similarly depicted Jesus Christ or Jesus the Messiah as the true "Son of God", the high priest. Perhaps it was the unknown writer of *Hebrews* who started the trend, where Jesus as the "high priest *(archiereus)* forever, after the order of Melchizedek",[8] is a recurrent theme.[9] It was a natural extension of the mythology surrounding the messiah. If the messiah was high priest and king, then so too was Jesus, for he was the messiah. At the beginning of *Hebrews,* the Son is described explicitly as the creative power, "By whom also He made the worlds". Later, the same Son is equated with the "great high priest *(archiereus),* . . . Jesus the Son of God".[10]

Clement of Alexandria, quoting the well-known opening to John's gospel, similarly speaks of "the great high priest *(archiereus),* 'by whom all things were made, and without whom not even one thing was made'[11]".[12] He also refers to *Hebrews* when he speaks of Jesus Christ as

> the only high priest *(archiereus),* who alone possesses the knowledge of the sonship of God. He is Melchizedek, "king of peace",[13] the most fit of all to head the race of men. He is a legislator too, inasmuch as he gave the law by the mouth of the prophets, enjoining and teaching most distinctly what things are to be done, and what not. Who is there of nobler lineage than he whose only Father is God?
>
> *Clement of Alexandria, Miscellanies 2:5; cf. WCA2 p.13*

Origen, interpreting the beloved or the bridegroom of the *Song of Songs* as Christ, to whom the soul is drawn, similarly says that this "same Christ is called priest as well as bridegroom – priest indeed, because he is the mediator of God and men, and all creation".[14]

See also: **priest**.

1. *1 Samuel* 24:6; 26:9, 11, 23; *2 Samuel* 1:14, 16; 19:22.
2. *Genesis* 14:18.
3. *Psalms* 110:4, *KJV.*
4. *Leviticus* 21:10–15.
5. *Exodus* 28:1–43.
6. Philo Judaeus, *On the Migration of Abraham* 18; *cf. PCW4* pp.190–93.
7. *Exodus* 28:21, 39:10–14.
8. *Hebrews* 6:20; *cf.* 5:1–6, 10.
9. *Hebrews* 2:17; 3:1, 4:14–15; 7:1–3, 26–28; 8:1–7; 9:7, 11, 25; 13:11–12.
10. *Hebrews* 4:14, *KJV.*
11. *John* 1:3.

12. Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 6:17, *WCA2* p.396.
13. *Hebrews* 7:2.
14. Origen, *On the Song of Songs* 1:3, *OSS* p.71.

**hijiri** (J) *Lit.* knowing *(shiri)* the sun *(hi);* he who knows the sun; a wandering holy man or woman in Japanese folk religion, often unordained or unconventionally ordained, and usually operating outside traditional, institutional Buddhism in an attempt to meet the spiritual and religious needs of ordinary people; often a person of pronounced personal power and charisma, wielding significant influence over others; also used in Japan for *Shintō,* Daoist and Buddhist sages, ascetics, and shamans; sometimes employed as a title or honorific. With the introduction of Buddhism to Japan (538 CE), the pre-Buddhism *hijiri* evolved into the antithesis of Japanese Buddhist institutionalism, with its officials and hierarchy of monks. The *hijiri* was regarded as the ideal *ubasoku* (layman, Buddhist lay worshipper; S. *upāsaka*).

In pre-Buddhist Japan, the *hijiri* was a keeper of the calendar, probably associated with the unofficial cult of the sun goddess *Amaterasu.* From this association, he came to be regarded as the sage, as one who lets the light of his understanding shine on others. The influence of Daoism and Confucianism further expanded the meaning of the term to include the Chinese understanding of the *xiān* (spiritual immortal) and the *shēng* (holy man, saint). As one who was believed to inwardly transcend the opposites of *mu* and *yū* (C. *wú* and *yǒu*), of nonbeing and being, life and death, male and female, the *hijiri* was regarded as someone who would find happiness in the hereafter.[1]

As wandering lay practitioners, *hijiris* lived outside the institutionalized Buddhism that was centred on Buddhist temples. Often, they were reformers and charismatic leaders of popular Buddhist movements. Among them were some of the most influential and well-known Buddhist leaders. Travelling widely, they were reciters of Buddhist texts, performers of rituals, often merely performers and players, not necessarily known for their saintliness.[2]

One of most well-known among the early *hijiris* was the Japanese monk known as Kūya Shōnin or Saint Kūya (903–972), promoter of the *Kūya* branch of the *Tendai* (C. *Tiāntái*) school of Buddhism. Kūya was an early advocate of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, passing his time as an itinerant teacher, urging the common people to place faith in Amitābha Buddha ('Buddha of Infinite Light') through constant recitation of the Pure Land *nembutsu mantra,* "*namu* Amida Butsu (praise to the Buddha of Infinite Light)". By constant repetition and remembrance of the name of Amida Butsu, the practitioner hoped to be reborn in the western paradise (pure land) of Amida, where enlightenment could easily be attained, and the sufferings of rebirth avoided.

This simple practice could be performed by all, regardless of their intellectual attainments or depth of knowledge concerning Buddhist doctrine. Kūya was among the first in a category of itinerant Buddhist preachers who became known as *nembutsu hijiris* or *Amida hijiris.* In Kyōto, Kūya became known as Ichi-Hijiri (saint of the market place).

Born into an aristocratic family, Kūya relinquished domestic life at the age of twenty, and was ordained as a novice at the Owari Provincial temple, taking Kūya as his novice name. After some time in study, he took to an itinerant lifestyle, beating a gong while ceaselessly repeating the name of Amida and preaching his message to the common people. Like other *hijiris* of his time, he involved himself in social and charitable works, collecting alms for the poor and for the building of temples, visiting jails, repairing and extending roads, digging wells, and building bridges. Later in life, he was fully ordained as a *Tendai* monk, but always retained his novice's name, and never abandoned his work as a Buddhist preacher.

The *nembutsu hijiris,* also called *hijiri gata,* were one of three groups of monks on Mount Kōya, a mountainous area long regarded as sacred, especially by those of the *Kōyasan Shingon* school of Japanese Buddhism. The other two groups were *Shugendō,* whose teachings were a mix of *Mantrayāna* Buddhism (esoteric Buddhism with an emphasis on *mantras*) with *Shintō* shamanism and *Onmyodō,* which mixed Daoism with *Shintō* shamanism – *Shintō* being the Japanese traditional religion.

See also: **Amitābha** (▸1).

1. See J.H. Kamstra, *Unidentifiable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, UBBA* pp.51–52.
2. See Ichiro Hori, "On the Concept of the *Hijiri,*" *CHHM* p.184; Taikō Yamasaki, *Shingon, SJEB* pp.39–40.

**hilāl** (A/P) *Lit.* crescent; the crescent moon, the new moon; significant in Islam, where the passage of time is measured in lunar months, a calendar to which all Muslim religious festivals, such as *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) and *Ramaḍān* (the month of fasting) are referenced. The lunar calendar is mentioned in the *Qur'ān:*

> When they ask you concerning the new moons *(ahillah),* say:
> "They are fixed seasons for men, and for the pilgrimage."
>
> *Qur'ān 2:189; cf. AYA, MGK*

In Sufi poetry, the new moon is used as metaphor in a variety of contexts. Rūmī, for instance, likens the elegance and spiritual stature of a perfect saint to the new moon:

He saw a person excellent and worshipful,
  a sun amidst a shadow,
  coming from afar, like the new moon *(hilāl):*
He was nonexistent, though existent in the form of fantasy.
In the spirit, fantasy is as naught,
  yet behold a world revolving on fantasy!

*Rūmī, Maśnavī I:68–70; cf. MJR2 p.8*

In this "existent" world of illusion or "fantasy", the saint is only partially revealed, like the new moon, or like the "sun amidst shadow". In the divine world of Nonexistence, the saint is like the cool radiance of the full moon.

In another story, the new moon is the disciple who is in the slow and steady process of spiritually developing into the full moon of a saint:

The new moon *(hilāl)* and the full moon *(badr)* are one:
  they are far from duality, and from imperfection and corruption.
The new moon *(hilāl)* is inwardly free from imperfection:
  its apparent imperfection is only due to its increasing gradually.
Night by night, it gives a lesson in gradualness,
  and with deliberation it produces relief (for itself).
With deliberation, it says, "O hasty fool,
  only step by step can one mount to the roof."

*Rūmī, Maśnavī VI:1208–11; cf. MJR6 pp.325–26*

**ḥizb Allāh** (A/P) *Lit.* party *(ḥizb)* of God *(Allāh);* the lovers of God, the true believers; a term originating in the *Qur'ān:*

Those who turn to God, His Messenger, and the faithful, they should know that it is the party of God *(ḥizb Allāh)* who are sure to triumph.

*Qur'ān 5:56; cf. AYA, KPA, MGK*

And:

You will find no believers in God and the Last Day loving those who oppose God *(ḥādd Allāh)* and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their kin. For God has inscribed faith upon their hearts, and strengthened them with His own Spirit. He will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are the party of God *(ḥizb Allāh).* It is the party of God *(ḥizb Allāh)* that will surely triumph.

*Qur'ān 58:22; cf. AYA, KPA, MGK*

The meaning appears divisive. One translation even has the first sentence as, "You shall find no believers in God and in the Last Day on friendly terms with those who oppose God *(ḥādd Allāh).*..."[1] Maybudī, however, interprets the passage in a more conciliatory manner:

> The party of God *(ḥizb Allāh)* is said to represent a group who are lovers and servants of God's creatures....
>
> The prophet David asked, "O Lord, who belongs to the party of God *(ḥizb Allāh)?*"
>
> God replied, "Those who are blind to the sins of others, who are pure of heart, and serve others."
>
> *Maybudī, in Kashf al-Asrār, KA10 p.26, in SSE3 p.123*

In modern times, *Ḥizb Allāh* is the name of a militant Islamic movement, generally anglicized as 'Hezbollah', founded in Lebanon in 1982 in response to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon (1982) and the Islamic revolution in Iran (1980), led by Ayatollah Khomeini.

1. *Qur'ān* 58:22, *KPA.*

**holy ones** (He. *kadoshim,* sg. *kadosh,* Gk. *hagioi, hosioi,* sg. *hagios, hosios*) Beings, human or otherwise, of great purity and sublimity; the heavenly host of angels or pure spiritual beings inhabiting the higher heavens or surrounding the 'throne of God', as in the "watchers and holy ones *(kadoshim)*" of *Daniel* and other revelational texts;[1] devotees, righteous or pure ones, the followers of particular religious groups; saviours or masters; a common term appearing in Jewish, Christian, Manichaean and other allied Middle Eastern texts; also (in the singular) God, a usage very commonly found (as *Ha-Kadosh* and *'Atika Kadisha*) in the Kabbalah.

*Kadoshim* is a biblical term. In *Proverbs,* it is used for sages and prophets:

> I am myself the stupidest of people,
> bereft of human intelligence,
> I have not learnt wisdom,
> and I lack the knowledge of the holy ones *(kadoshim).*
>
> *Proverbs 30:2–3, NJB*

Likewise, it is said in *Job* that man is so spiritually impure that "he puts no trust in His holy ones *(kadoshim)*".[2] In *Daniel, kadoshim* refers specifically to the "holy ones *(kadoshim)* of the Most High" – to souls entrusted by God with the salvation of other souls:[3]

> The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the holy ones *(kadoshim)* of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
>
> *Daniel 7:27; cf. KJV*

In Christianity, Jesus is described in *Mark* (by "a man with an unclean spirit") as the "holy one *(hagios)* of God".[4] The story is copied by Luke,[5] and the same epithet is applied in *1 John.*[6] In *Acts,* Jesus is designated as both *hagios*[7] and *hosios,*[8] by reference to one of the psalms,[9] where the original Hebrew for "holy one" is *ḥasid.*

In an ode that speaks of the creative power as "Wisdom", the "Son" and the "Word of Knowledge", with *gnōsis* as "His Path", the unknown writer of the early Christian *Odes of Solomon* says that the way to God is proclaimed by "His holy ones":

> The Most High will be known through His holy ones,
> who will announce the coming of the Lord
> to those that sing songs;
> That they may go forth to meet Him,
> and may sing to Him with joy,
> and with the Harp of many tunes.
>
> *Odes of Solomon 7:16–17, OSD p.34*

Here, singing "songs" and the "Harp of many tunes" refer to listening to the divine music of the Word.

In the Manichaean psalm book in Coptic, Jesus is frequently addressed as the "king of the holy ones". In one of these psalms, the devotee also says that he has been purified at the "hands of the holy ones":

> The cleansing of immortality –
> I have been cleansed therein by the hands of the holy ones.
> They summon me to the bridechambers of the Height:
> I will go up clothed in the robe.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXI, MPB p.76*

In another of these psalms, the soul prays for the "crown of the holy ones". The "robe" and the "crown" are both metaphors for the ultimate spiritual treasure received by the soul, while the "bridechambers" are the inner heavens:

> Christ, take me into your bridechambers. . . .
> Let me rejoice in all the bridechambers,
> and give me the crown of the holy ones.
>
> *Manichaean Psalm Book CCLXIII; cf. MPB p.80*

In another, the writer petitions the creative power, symbolized as the "Tree of Life", to reveal to him the inner spiritual form ("the face") of the "holy ones":

> Open to me, O Tree of Life;
> O Tree of Rest, open to me.
> Open to me your essences
> that I may contemplate the face of the holy ones.
> *Manichaean Psalm Book; cf. MPB p.154*

See also: ʿ**Atika Kadisha** (2.1), **Holy One** (▸1), **holy ones** (▸4), **Kadosh** (2.1), **kadoshim**.

1. *Daniel* 4:13, 17, 23, *Ascension of Isaiah, 1 Enoch, 3 Enoch, etc.*
2. *Job* 15:15; *cf. KJV.* See also *Job* 5:1.
3. See also *Daniel* 7:18, 21–22, 25.
4. *Mark* 1:23–24.
5. *Luke* 4:34.
6. *1 John* 2:20.
7. *Acts* 3:14.
8. *Acts* 2:27, 13:35.
9. *Psalms* 16:10.

**hoopoe** (P. *hudhud*) A ground-feeding bird with pinkish-brown body plumage, broadly striped black-and-white wings, a long probing beak, and an erectile crest; widely distributed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The name is of seventeenth century origin, derived from the earlier 'hoopoop', imitative of the hoopoe's call, as are the Persian *hudhud* and *pūpak,* and the Latin *upupa eopos.* In folklore and legend, the hoopoe's browny-orange crest, tipped with black, has given it the status of royalty.

According to mythology (retold in the *Qur'ān,*[1] and elsewhere in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim legend), King Solomon – possessor of great wisdom and owner of a magic signet ring that enabled him to command the *jinn* (supernatural or spirit beings) and to understand the language of animals and birds – kept a hoopoe in his service as a messenger. In a well-known story, the bird carries the correspondence between him and Bilqīs, Queen of Sheba. The role of the hoopoe as the king's messenger is allegorized in ʿAṭṭār's famous classic poem, *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr* ('Conference of the Birds'), where the king is God and the hoopoe symbolizes the perfect saint, guiding his flock of disciples back to the divine Immensity.

According to the allegory, the birds of the world gather together in search of a king. When they begin to argue, the hoopoe steps forward:

They argued how to set about their quest.
The hoopoe fluttered forward; on his breast,
there shone the symbol of the spirit's Way,
and on his head Truth's crown, a feathered spray.
Discerning, righteous and intelligent,
he spoke: "My purposes are heaven-sent;
I keep God's secrets, mundane and divine,
in proof of which behold the holy sign,
'*Bismillah* (in the Name of God)' – etched forever on my beak.

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 688–92, MTAN pp.242–43, CBD p.32*

The hoopoe goes on to tell the birds that they already have a king – the *Sīmurgh* ('Thirty Birds') – to whom they owe allegiance. He lives close to them, but they live far away from him. To reach him requires a long and arduous journey. Yet not to make the journey would be to waste one's life.

At first, the birds are enthusiastic to make a start but, when they realize how difficult the journey is going to be, they make all manner of excuses, according to their individual circumstances and temperaments:

The hoopoe finished, and at once the birds
effusively responded to his words.
All praised the splendour of their distant King;
All rose impatient to be on the wing;
Each would renounce the self and be the friend
of his companions till the journey's end.
But when they pondered on the journey's length,
they hesitated; their ambitious strength
dissolved: each bird, according to his kind,
felt flattered – but reluctantly declined.

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 745–49, MTAN p.245, CBD p.35*

Now the birds step (or hop) forward, one by one, with their fears and hesitations. Compassionately, but with vigour, the hoopoe counsels them. The nightingale speaks of his love for the beauty of the rose, not wishing to be parted from his transitory beloved, but the hoopoe encourages him to seek the eternal Beauty that never fades. The parrot says that he is in a cage, but the hoopoe tells him he is a "cringing slave" to accept his circumstances. The duck declares that it needs water to be happy; the partridge is besotted by jewels; the heron maintains that its perpetual misery demands the solitude of the seashore; the falcon is satisfied with his position at court, resting on the king's wrist; the finch is too timorous to set out; while the wagtail believes itself to be so weak and fragile that it could never undertake the journey. To each the hoopoe has an appropriate response, often illustrated

by parable and anecdote, pointing out to each of them the worthlessness of the things they treasure, and the falseness and self-indulgence of their various attitudes.

The owl, for instance, insists that he must live in ruined buildings, far from the discord of men, and where buried treasure may one day be found. The hoopoe has a pithy response:

> The hoopoe answers him: "Besotted fool,
> suppose you get this gold for which you drool –
> What would you do but guard it night and day
> while life itself – unnoticed – slips away?
> The love of gold and jewels is blasphemy;
> Our faith is wrecked by such idolatry.
> To love gold is to be an infidel,
> an idol-worshipper who merits hell.
> On Judgment Day the miser's secret greed
> stares from his face for everyone to read.
> *ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 1015–19, MTAN p.278, CBD p.49*

The peacock remembers that he was once in paradise, a place he feels he understands, and to which he longs to return. But once again, the hoopoe has no time for his excuses:

> Next came the peacock, splendidly arrayed
> in many-coloured pomp; this he displayed
> as if he were some proud, self-conscious bride,
> turning with haughty looks from side to side.
> "The painter of the world created me,"
> he shrieked, "But his celestial wealth you see
> should not excite your hearts to jealousy.
> I was a dweller once in paradise;
> There the insinuating snake's advice
> deceived me – I became his friend, disgrace
> was swift and I was banished from that place.
>
> My dearest hope is that some blessed day,
> a guide will come to indicate the way
> back to my paradise. The King you praise
> is too unknown a goal; my inward gaze
> is fixed forever on that lovely land –
> There is the goal which I can understand.
> How could I seek the *Sīmurgh* out when I
> remember paradise?" And in reply,

the hoopoe said: "These thoughts have made you stray
further and further from the proper Way;
You think your monarch's palace of more worth
than He who fashioned it and all the earth.
The home we seek is in eternity;
The Truth we seek is like a shoreless sea,
of which your paradise is but a drop.
This Ocean can be yours; why should you stop,
beguiled by dreams of evanescent dew?
The secrets of the sun are yours, but you
content yourself with motes trapped in the beams.
Turn to what truly lives, reject what seems –
which matters more, the body or the soul?
Be whole: desire and journey to the Whole.

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 822–40, MTAN p.269, CBD pp.39–40*

And so the hoopoe admonishes and encourages the birds, until at last they give up their excuses and set out upon the journey. After a short distance, they select the hoopoe as their leader, whom they then ask to explain to them the nature of the Way. The hoopoe responds at length, beginning with a primary truth of Sufism and of all mysticism: that the self or *nafs* must be overcome, and replaced by divine love:

And with one voice the birds were heard to say:
"Tell us, dear hoopoe, how we should proceed –
Our weakness quails before this glorious deed."
"A lover," said the hoopoe, now their guide,
"is one in whom all thoughts of self have died;
Those who renounce the self deserve the name;
Righteous or sinful, they are all the same!
Your heart is thwarted by the self's control;
Destroy its hold on you and reach your goal.
Give up this hindrance, give up mortal sight,
for only then can you approach the light.

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 1161–67, MTAN pp.284–85, CBD p.56*

As before, the discourse is interspersed with stories and fables. At one point, the birds ask the hoopoe how he has attained such wisdom. The hoopoe replies that he received it by a glance of grace received from his master, Solomon, and he advises them to "pray" (meditate) until they too receive such a glance from "Solomon":

One asked: "How is it you surpass us in
this search for Truth; what is our crippling sin?
We search and so do you – but you receive
Truth's purity while we stand by and grieve."

The hoopoe answered him: "Great Solomon
once looked at me – it is that glance alone
which gave me what I know; no wealth could bring
the Substance I received from wisdom's King.
No one can gain this by the forms of prayer;
For even Satan bowed with pious care;
Though don't imagine that you need not pray;
We curse the fool who tricks in you this way.
Pray always, never for one moment cease,
pray in despair and when your goods increase,
consume your life with prayer, till Solomon
bestows his glance, and ignorance is gone.
When Solomon accepts you, you will know
far more than my unequal words can show."

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 1657–65, MTAN p.305, CBD p.79*

The discourse in interspersed by questions and comments from the assembled birds. One of them, for example, admits to his fear of death:

Another bird spoke up: "The Way is long,
and I am neither valiant nor strong.
I'm terrified of death; I know that I –
before the first stage is complete – must die;
I tremble at the thought; when death draws near,
I know I'll shriek and groan in snivelling fear.
Whoever fights death with his sword will meet
inevitable, absolute defeat;
His sword and hand lie smashed. Alas! What grief
they grasp – who grasp the sword as their belief!"

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2305–9, MTAN p.336, CBD p.115*

But the hoopoe, as always, excises the weakness, replacing it with strength:

The hoopoe said: "How feebly you complain!
How long will this worn bag of bones remain?
What are you but a few bones? – and at heart
each bone is soft and hastens to depart.

Aren't you aware that life, from birth to death,
is little more that one precarious breath?
That all who suffer birth must also die,
their being scattered to the windy sky?
As you are reared to live, so from your birth
you're reared to one day leave this earth.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2310–14, MTAN p.336, CBD p.115*

Another bird complains that things always go wrong for him:

Another bird said: "Hoopoe, it's no good.
Things never happen as I'd hoped they would;
I've spent my time in misery since birth,
the most unlucky wretch in all the earth –
My heart knows so much torment that it seems
each atom of my body raves and screams;
My life has trodden out a hopeless way;
God damn me if I've had one happy day!
These sorrows lock me in myself – how can
I undertake this journey which you plan?
If I were happy, I would gladly start;
What stops me is this sorrow in my heart.
What can I do? Look, I appeal to you –
I've told you everything, what can I do?"
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2390–96, MTAN p.340, CBD p.120*

But the hoopoe simply advises him to stop thinking so much about himself:

The hoopoe said: "How arrogant you are
to think your wretched self so singular!
The disappointments of this world will die
in less time than the blinking of an eye,
and as the earth must pass, pass by the earth –
Don't even glance at it, know what it's worth;
What empty foolishness it is to care
for what must one day be dispersed to air.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2397–2400, MTAN p.340, CBD p.120*

Not all the birds complain, however. Some are deeply inspired by his encouragement:

"O hoopoe," cried another of the birds,
"What lofty ardour blazes from your words!

Although I seem despondent, weak and lame,
I burn with aspiration's noble flame –
And though I'm not obedient, I feel
my soul devoured by an insatiate zeal."
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2599–2601, MTAN p.350, CBD p.132*

And the hoopoe explains:

The hoopoe said: "This strange, magnetic force
that holds God's ancient lovers to their course
still shows the Truth: if you will but aspire,
you will attain to all that you desire.
Before an atom of such need, the sun
seems dim and murky by comparison –
It is life's strength, the wings by which we fly
beyond the further reaches of the sky.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 2602–5, MTAN p.350, CBD p.132*

The final question concerns the length of the journey, and the hoopoe describes the seven "valleys" that the soul must cross. These are human stages. They are the Valleys of the Quest, of Love, of the Insight into Mystery, of Detachment and Contentment, of Unity, of Awe, and finally of spiritual Poverty – of complete annihilation of the self in the divine Nothingness:[2]

And there you are suspended, motionless,
till you are drawn – the impulse is not yours –
A drop absorbed in seas that have no shores.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 3232–33, MTAN p.380, CBD p.166*

The journey itself is covered briefly, and the birds all arrive safely at the court of the *Sīmurgh,* where they are united with their King. And there in the eternity of the Divine:

A hundred thousand centuries went by,
and then those birds, who were content to die,
to vanish in annihilation, saw
their Selves had been restored to them once more;
That, after Nothingness, they had attained
eternal Life, and selfhood was regained.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 4269–71, MTAN p.428, CBD pp.220–21*

ʿAṭṭār then goes on to praise the virtues of complete absorption of the self in the oneness of the Divine:

This Nothingness, this Life, are states no tongue
  at any time has adequately sung –
Those who can speak still wander far away
  from that dark truth they struggle to convey,
  and, by analogies, they try to show
  the forms men's partial knowledge cannot know. . . .

While you still travel in your worldly state,
  you cannot pass beyond this glorious gate.
Why do you waste your life in slothful sleep?
Rise up, for there is nothing you can keep;
What will it profit you to comprehend
  the present world when it must have an end? . . .

You have no knowledge of what lies ahead;
Think deeply, ponder, do not be misled –
  until our King excludes you from His grace,
  you cannot hope to see Him face to face;
You cannot hope for Life till you progress
  through some small shadow of this Nothingness.

First He will humble you in dust and mire,
  and then bestow the glory you desire.
Be nothing first! And then you will exist,
  you cannot live whilst life and self persist –
Till you reach Nothingness, you cannot see
  the life you long for in eternity.

*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 4272–75, 4277–80, 4287–92, MTAN pp.428–29, CBD pp.221–22*

And at the ending of their quest:

No stranger followed them, or could unfold
  the secrets they to one another told –
Alone at last, together they conferred;
Blindly they saw themselves and deaf they heard –
But who can speak of this? I know if I
  betrayed my knowledge, I would surely die;
If it were lawful for me to relate
  such truths to those who have not reached this state,
  those gone before us would have made some sign;
But no sign comes, and silence must be mine.

Here, eloquence can find no jewel but one:
that silence when the longed-for goal is won.
The greatest orator would here be made
in love with silence and forget his trade.
And I too cease; I have described the Way –
Now, you must act – there is no more to say.
*ʿAṭṭār, Conference of the Birds 4448–55, MTAN p.435, CBD p.229*

1. *Qurʾān* 27:20*ff.*
2. ʿAṭṭār, *Conference of the Birds* 3229–31, *MTAN* p.389, *CBD* p.166.

**ḥoter** (He) *Lit.* branch, shoot, plant, rod; a term appearing only twice in biblical texts. *Proverbs* maintains that "The fool's mouth contains a rod *(ḥoter)* of pride."[1] In *Isaiah,* it is used synonymously with *neẓer:*

And there shall come forth a branch *(ḥoter)*
out of the stem of Yishay (Jesse, David's father),
and a shoot *(neẓer)* shall grow forth from his roots:
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.
*Isaiah 11:1–2; cf. KB*

See also: **neẓer**.

1. *Proverbs* 14:3, *JB.*

**howling dervishes** A pejorative name given in colonial days to the *Rifāʿīyah* dervishes, founded by Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī (*d.*1182), whose exuberant and noisy *samāʿ* (music and dance sessions) included the insistent repetition of "*Yā Ḥayy! Yā Qayyūm!* (O Living One! O Self-Subsisting One!)". According to an account by Aḥmad al-Aflākī, writing in the first half of the fourteenth century, they performed a variety of "conjuring tricks" and performed various seemingly supernatural feats:

They walked into fire, put heated iron in their mouth, swallowed snakes, sweated blood, bathed in boiling oil, performed conjuring tricks like making sugar and changing wax into laudanum, caused blood to drip from a whip, rode the foal of a donkey, and other such things.
*Aḥmad al-Aflākī, Manāqib al-ʿĀrifīn 5:16, MASA2 p.716, FKG p.498*

See also: **darvesh**, **samāʿ** (▸3).

**ḥozeh** (He) *Lit.* visionary, seer; prophet, holy man; from the root *ḥ-z-h* (to see); one of a number of biblical terms used more or less interchangeably for prophets, holy men, and seers; used synonymously with *roʿeh* (shepherd) and *navi* (prophet). *Ḥozeh* is related to the word *ḥazon* (vision), which in this context implies inner vision, one of the ways in which a seer receives other-worldly understanding and knowledge of the future. Hence, the prophet Hosea speaks in the name of God:

> I have also spoken by the prophets *(navi),* and I have multiplied visions *(ḥazon),* and used similes by means of the prophets *(navi).*
>
> *Hosea 12:11, KB*

On the evidence of biblical stories, however, many of the prophets and spiritual guides of the early Israelites were more like astrologers and clairvoyants than true holy men or mystics. Common among the retinues of kings, prophets of this nature sought to please their masters, providing predictions and oracles of a mundane nature, rather than genuine spiritual guidance.

According to *2 Samuel,* King David's personal seer *(ḥozeh)* received messages direct from *Yahweh,* although the means by which these messages were delivered is not mentioned. In this instance, *Yahweh,* being angry with the Israelites, has previously prompted David to order a census of his people. When the census is completed some months later, David is struck with guilt at having ordered it, and feels that he has "sinned greatly". Why he should have felt this way remains uncertain, but during the night "the word of the Lord came unto the prophet *(navi)* Gad, David's seer *(ḥozeh),*"[1] telling him to go to the king and offer him a choice of three bad things by way of punishment – famine, defeat in battle, or plague. David decides to leave it up to *Yahweh* to choose, and *Yahweh* sends an epidemic that kills 70,000 people out of the 1.3 million counted in the census.[2]

*2 Kings* relates that *Yahweh* warns the people of Israel and Judah – through the mouths of his prophets *(navi)* and seers *(ḥozeh)* – to live virtuous and upright lives; but they fail to do so. Here, the prophets and seers are clearly portrayed as conveying a spiritual and moral message:

> Yet the Lord *(Yahweh)* testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets *(navi)* and by all the seers *(ḥozeh),* saying, "Turn away from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets *(navi).*"
>
> *2 Kings 17:13; cf. KJV*

In the book of *Amos,* when the prophet *(navi)* Amos angers Amaziah the priest of Bethel with his prophesies of impending doom, Amaziah contemptuously dismisses the prophet:

> Amaziah said unto Amos, "O you seer *(ḥozeh),* go, flee away to the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there."
>
> *Amos 7:12, JCL*

A diatribe in *Isaiah* warns the people of the city of Ariel (Jerusalem) that they will soon be besieged by hostile armies, and that a number of other bad things will befall them. Among these calamities, says the writer, speaking in the name of *Yahweh,* is that not only will the people lose their understanding, but their prophets and seers will also lose their faculty of privileged insight:

> For the Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of lethargy, and has closed your eyes, O prophets *(navi),* and has veiled your heads, O seers *(ḥozeh).*[3]
>
> *Isaiah 29:10; cf. JB, KJV*

See also: **ish Elohim**, **navi**, **roʿeh**.

1. *2 Samuel* 24:11, *KJV; cf. 1 Chronicles* 29:29.
2. *2 Samuel* 24:1–25.
3. *Cf. Isaiah* 30:10.

**hudhud** (A/P), **pūpak** (P) See **hoopoe**.

**hungan** (Creole) (fem. *mambo*) *Lit.* a Haitian *Vodou* priest; prophet, healer, doctor, confidential advisor, *etc.;* one who administers a *hunfor* (*Vodou* temple); from the Fon *hùn gan,* the Fon people being a major West African ethnic group in Benin and southwest Nigeria, who suffered greatly from the slave trade; one of two grades of *Vodou* priest: the *hungan asogwe* (high priest) and the *hungan sur pwen* (junior priest), the high priest being permitted to ordain other *hungan;* also spelled *houngan* and *oungan.*

The Creole *Vodou* comes from the Fon *Vodoun,* which means 'spirit' or 'deity'. It is an Afro-Haitian blend of various sub-Saharan African traditions, encompassing religion, spirituality, animism, spirit and ancestor worship, philosophy, healing, and justice. Along with Roman Catholicism, it is one of the two officially recognized religions of Haiti. According to *Vodou* belief, humans are spiritual beings who dwell in the visible part of the material world.

The invisible part is populated by a host of ancestors and spirits *(loas, lwas)* of various kinds, who were created by God as helpers in the administration of this world. The primary purpose of *Vodou* is to serve these spirits *(sevi lwa)* through ritual prayer and various rites, the intention being to maintain harmony in the world, in the community, and in the relationship between human beings, the spirits, and the unseen world:[1]

> Afro-Haitian belief acknowledges God as *Gran Mèt* (Grand Master) creator of heaven and earth. But the Almighty Master of the universe, too remote to involve Himself with the daily problems of mankind, has delegated spirits to serve as intermediaries. These *loa* are associated with vital forces such as water and fire, love and death. Vodouists 'serve' these forces to keep in harmony with them and thereby avert disaster.
>
> *Carole Devillers, "Haiti's Voodoo Pilgrimages," SSHV pp.395, 399*

Each *hungan* or *mambo* is associated with a traditional lineage, and their primary roles are to help maintain the relationship with the spirits or gods on behalf of their community, and to keep alive their traditional songs, prayers, and rites. *Hungans* are believed to communicate directly with the spirits from whom they seek guidance, giving them significant influence among the people, and making each *hungan* to a large extent independent of the others:

> Unlike other established religions, there is no hierarchy of bishops, archbishops, cardinals, or a pope in *Vodou.* Each *hunfor* is a law unto itself, following the traditions of *Vodou,* but modifying and changing the ceremonies and rituals in various ways. This is because the religious leaders of the *hunfor* speak directly with the gods of *Vodou,* and are not obliged to answer to anyone else to interpret what the gods tell them. Thus, the structure of *Vodou* can best be understood by the layman if he would consider how similar and how different each individual Roman Catholic church would be if for thousands of years each priest had been free to interpret Christianity as he saw fit without any intervention from Rome.
>
> *Milo Rigaud, Secrets of Voodoo, SVMR p.31*

The role of the *hungan* or *mambo* is far more than simply that of a priest or priestess. Their stature is the highest in their community of worshippers. Spirituality is only one of their areas of expertise:

> The *Vodou hungan* or *mambo* is the confessor, doctor, magician, confidential advisor to individuals and to families, to politicians, and

> even financial advisor to people of highest as well as those of lowest estates. He is a prophet, too, of such a sort that scarcely anything is done without his advice in the community where he is the central figure. In the *hunfor,* he presides over everything that is done. Here, his authority is absolute.
>
> *Milo Rigaud, Secrets of Voodoo, SVMR p.34*

Despite being forcefully baptized into the Catholic religion when slaves were brought to Haiti from the Gulf of Benin (formerly Coast of Slaves) in the mid-seventeenth century, the *hungans* of these groups were able to maintain their spirit practices by assigning new names to their gods, which coincided with the names of Catholic saints. They never deserted their spirits but secretly worshipped them in the guise of Catholic saints who were depicted in images with the same attributes as their own spirits. Thus, *Ogou Feray,* the god of war, was worshipped as St James the Greater, depicted on horseback and brandishing a sword. *Ezili Freda,* the goddess of love, was assigned to the Virgin Mary, and so on. Forms of Catholicism were thus incorporated into *Vodou,* the intention always being to worship the ancestral spirits, not the Christian saints. In structure and spirit, Haitian *Vodou,* with its *rada* rites has remained essentially Dahomean (from Dahomey, now part of Benin). The *rada* are benevolent spirits who protect their people. It is thought that only five percent of the people who practise *Vodou* do not take part in the *rada* rites:

> The formation of *Vodou* in Haiti can only be explained by the presence, in the labour gangs, of priests or 'servants of the gods', who knew the rites. Otherwise, the religious systems of Dahomey and Nigeria would have deteriorated into incoherent practices or simple rites of black and white magic. Instead, what do we find in Haiti? Temples, organized clergy, a rather complicated ritual, sophisticated dances and rhythms. In spite of brutal uprooting from their own social milieu, the slaves contrived to resurrect, in exile, the religious framework in which they had been brought up. *Bokono* (magicians) and *vodun-no* (priests), trained in Africa, taught the following generations, born in slavery, the names and characteristics of the gods and the sacrifices required.
>
> *Alfred Metraux, Voodoo in Haiti, VHAM p.30*

The profession of a *hungan* can be hereditary, when a parent hands over the secrets of his art to a son or grandson, or it can come from the call of the spirits when they appear in a symbolic dream or when they take hold of a participant during a ceremony. In the latter instance, the participant is said to be possessed. He has become the 'horse *(chwal, cheval)*' of the *loa* that is mounting him:

> *Vodou* adepts use the word 'knowledge *(connaissance)*' to describe what we would define as 'supernatural insight and the power which is derived therefrom'. It is in degrees of 'knowledge' that various *hungan* and *mambo* differ from each other. In addition to this power, which depends more or less on supernatural gifts, *hungan* and *mambo* must also acquire a more technical kind of education: they must know the names of the spirits, their attributes, their emblems, their various special tastes and the liturgies appropriate to the different kinds of ceremony. Only those who have mastered this lore deserve the title *hungan* or *mambo.* To do so requires perseverance, a good memory, musical aptitude, and a long experience of ritual. A good *hungan* is at one and the same time priest, healer, soothsayer, exorcist, organizer of public entertainments, and choirmaster.
>
> *Alfred Métraux, Voodoo in Haiti, VHAM pp.63–64*

> Most candidates for the priesthood go through a course of instruction lasting several months or even several years with a *hungan* or a *mambo* who wishes to take them on. They learn the technique of their profession by passing through all the 'grades' of the *Vodou* hierarchy, serving their master successively as *hunsi* (assistant), *hungenikon* (choirmaster), *laplace* (master of ceremonies), and *confiance* (apprentice *hungan* or *mambo*). The master's fame is reflected on his pupils and these, when they become *mambo* or *hungan,* talk with pride of their apprenticeship.
>
> Some priests say they got their education directly from the spirits. Among the *loas, Ogu, Legba, Ayizan* and *Simbi* regard themselves as proper *hungan* and undertake the instruction of certain novices, selected by them. A man who has received his *asson* (sacred rattle) from the 'mysteries' will pretend to be proud of it – in order to conceal a feeling of inferiority, for he who claims supernatural patronage has never had the advantage of a proper training and so tries to say as little as possible about his 'knowledge'.
>
> *Alfred Métraux, Voodoo in Haiti, VHAM p.68*

When an apprentice has completed his training, he is ready to receive initiation or 'the taking of the *asson*'. This ceremony is surrounded by great secrecy.

The *asson* is a sacred rattle, used to summon the *loas.* It is made of a dried and emptied gourd covered with a net of china beads coloured according to which *loas* are worshipped in the *hunfor.* Snake vertebrae are also incorporated as they represent the snake god Danballa, one of the divinities of the Dahomey mythology:

> The *hungan*-to-be is shut up in one of the sanctuary rooms for nine days. He lies on a straw mat with his *asson* by his side. His head rests

> on a stone under which a pack of cards has been placed. He may only sit up for a few minutes. His dreams during his confinement are extremely important: they are the means by which the gods – particularly the local ones – convey him their instructions. The formal enthronement of the *hungan* is called 'lifting *(haussement)*' because the main rite consists of raising the candidate three times in an armchair amid the cheering of all present. 'Lifting' is also practised whenever a community member achieves a new grade in the *Vodou* hierarchy.
>
> The gift of clairvoyance which earns a *hungan* the title of *divino* (seer) is obtained at the end of a special ceremony, the 'gripping of the eyes *(la prise des yeux)*', which is looked upon as the highest degree of priestly initiation.
>
> *Alfred Métraux, Voodoo in Haiti, VHAM p.69*

1. See *"Vodou," Encyclopædia Britannica, EB12.*

**hunsi** (Creole) *Lit.* spouse *(si)* of divinity *(hu);* servant of divinity; an assistant (of which there may be several) to the *hungan* or *mambo* in the *hunfor* (*Vodou* temple); usually female, and always dressed in white.

See also: **hungan**.

**illuminator** In a mystical context, one who brings spiritual illumination, one who brings spiritual light; enlightener; a master or saviour.

An epithet used for Jesus in the *Acts of Thomas,*[1] and for the Holy Ghost in the *Acts of John.*[2] Among the gnostic texts, in a *Letter of Peter to Philip,* Jesus is described as "an illuminator in the darkness".[3] In the *Second Apocalypse of James,* the spiritual form of Jesus seems to be appointing his brother James as a saviour when he says:

> You are an illuminator and a redeemer
> of those who are mine, and now of those who are yours.
>
> *Second Apocalypse of James 55, NHS11 pp.130–31*

In the *Apocalypse of Adam,* a generalized saviour, the "illuminator of knowledge", comes to the world, where he is persecuted by the hidden "powers" of the world who are confused about his origins and by their own ignorance. Ultimately, of course, the saviour overcomes the powers, and fulfils his mission.[4]

In Manichaean literature, the epithet is applied to both Jesus and Mānī. It is a title used for Mānī throughout the Coptic *Kephalaia,* as well as other texts:

Behold, the illuminator of hearts has come,
the lamp of light that illuminates
even those in darkness!
*Manichaean Hymns, MM2 p.322ff., RMP cl; cf. GSR p.84, ML p.52*

Among the Mandaeans, too, the saviour was regarded as the illuminator, the "pure mirror" who reflects the light of God upon other souls:[5]

Shine forth, give out light, pure mirror!
For in all the worlds you will be called 'illuminator'.
*Mandaean Prayer Book 323; cf. CPM p.228*

See also: **enlightener**, **mirror**.

1. *Acts of Thomas* VIII, *AAA* p.286.
2. *Acts of John* 14, 21, *ANT* pp.257, 264.
3. *Letter of Peter to Philip* 133–34, 139, *NHS31* pp.236–37.
4. *Apocalypse of Adam* 75–77, 82, 85, *NHS11* pp.172–79, 186–87, 194–95.
5. *Cf.* also *Mandaean Prayer Book* 326, 378, *CPM* pp.229, 287.

**illuminist** (Es. *alumbrados,* Fr. *illuminés*) A group of Christian mystics, who arose in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain, who believed that the soul can reach such perfection even in this life that it can contemplate the essence of God, and can understand the mystery of the Trinity. They maintained that all external worship was superfluous, that the sacraments were useless, and that it was not possible to sin while in a state of complete union with God, who is the essence of perfection. They believed that the highest perfection consists of passivity and resignation to the divine will, the loss of individuality, and complete absorption in God, states attained by mental prayer and contemplation.[1]

The movement spread rapidly, and the Inquisition proceeded relentlessly against all suspects. Anyone suspected of illuminist practices was taken into custody. Even Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, was investigated, and forbidden to preach for three years. The *alumbrados* were contemporary with Martin Luther and John Calvin, and foreshadowed the seventeenth-century quietists, who also originated in Spain, holding views similar to the illuminists. These movements emphasized internal spirituality at the expense of external practices, and as such attracted the unwelcome attention of the Inquisition. They arose as a reaction to a corrupt clergy and a Catholicism increasingly engrossed in externals. In the case of Luther and Calvin, the result was the Reformation and the founding of Protestantism, a schism that became the basis of considerable war and bloodshed over the centuries that followed.

The movement also spread to Picardy in northern France in 1623, where they were known as the *illuminés.* Another group of *illuminés* were discovered in the south of France in 1722. Both groups were suppressed.

See also: **quietism** (▸3).

1. See "Illuminati," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914).

**imām** (A/P) *Lit.* model, exemplar; a prayer leader who stands before the assembled congregation, every mosque having at least one *imām* associated with it, though in his absence, prayers may be led by any suitable man, the practice of leading prayers being said to date back to Muḥammad himself; a title of respect for the head of a community, school or any other such group – spiritual, religious or secular; the founder of a school of *sharīʿah* (religious law); a title given to some noted Sufis, as, for example, Imām al-Ghazālī and Imām al-Shādhilī; sometimes applied to Muḥammad as the supreme *Imām (Imām al-aʿẓam)* since he is regarded as the foremost of all the prophets;[1] the legal term for the supreme ruler of an Islamic state, referring to the *khalīfah* (caliph) in situations where the ruler of a state meets the qualifications of a *khalīfah.*

The *Qurʾān* names Abraham (Ibrāhīm) as the first *imām:*

> And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord
> with certain commands, which he fulfilled:
> He (God) said: "I have appointed you an *imām* of mankind.
> Abraham asked: "And what of my descendants?"
> "My promise," He replied, "does not apply to evildoers."
> *Qurʾān 2:124; cf. AYA, KPA*

The divine response is enigmatic, but speaking elsewhere of Abraham's "descendants", the *Qurʾān* says:

> And We made them leaders *(imām),*
> to guide mankind at our command;
> And We sent them inspiration to do good deeds,
> to establish regular prayers,
> and to practise regular charity;
> And they served none but Us alone.
> *Qurʾān 21:73; cf. AYA, KPA, MGK*

In addition to its general sense, the *Sunnīs* also apply the term *'imām'* to the caliphs, as leaders and actual rulers of the community. They consider the first four caliphs (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī) as the Rightly Guided

Ones *(al-Rāshidūn)* and as exemplars for the community, an evaluation not applied to later caliphs. Moreover, for the *Sunnīs,* the Imamate *(Imāmah)* remained an aspect of the caliphate.

The earliest major dissension in Islam, resulting in the split between the *Sunnīs* and the *Shīʿahs,* was over who should be the leader after Muḥammad. According to *Shīʿah* belief, Muḥammad appointed his cousin and son-in-law, ʿAlī ibn Ṭālib, as his successor or first *imām* of Islam. The *Sunnīs,* on the other hand, declared Abū Bakr to be the rightful leader (caliph), since Muḥammad had appointed him to lead the faithful in prayer during his last illness.

*Shīʿahs* consider all the caliphs except ʿAlī as illegitimate usurpers. According to the Twelve-*Imām Shīʿahs* ('Twelvers'), to which the majority of *Shīʿahs* belong, there is always the need for an *imām,* a divinely guided spiritual teacher and ruler. They maintain that Muḥammad transmitted esoteric teachings to ʿAlī alone, after whom the Imamate passed on to his son Ḥasan and, on his death, to Ḥasan's brother Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn, along with several members of the family, were killed by the Caliph Yazīd (recognized as caliph by the *Sunnīs,* but not by the *Shīʿahs*) in the battle of Karbalāʾ. This event had a profound and lasting emotional effect on the *Shīʿahs,* furnishing them with passionate motivation and a reason for martyrdom.

After Ḥusayn, the Imamate passed to his son ʿAlī, thence to ʿAlī's son Muḥammad Bāqir, and thence to Bāqir's son Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who became a famous scholar of Islamic law, religion and mysticism, respected by both *Sunnīs* and *Shīʿahs* alike. Jaʿfar's elder son, Ismāʿīl, died before his father, and Jaʿfar was succeeded by his younger son Mūsá. A divergent gnostic Ismāʿīlī movement then emerged when some *Shīʿahs* chose to follow Ismāʿīl's son, Muḥammad ibn Maymūn. The divergent branch also differed from the main branch in some matters of doctrine.

It was the main branch who came to be known as the Twelve-*Imām Shīʾahs.* According to their belief, the Prophet has had only twelve spiritual successors or *imāms.* The seventh, Mūsá al-Karīm ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, was followed in succession by ʿAlī al-Riḍāʾ (*d.*818), Muḥammad Jawād al-Taqī (*d.*835), ʿAlī al-Naqī (*d.*868), al-Ḥasan al-ʿAsharī (*d.c.*873) and Muḥammad al-Mahdī, of whom little is known. During this period, the *imāms* lived among their followers and instructed them directly. Their sayings are included in Shiʿite *ḥadīth* literature.

Among the Twelvers, *'imām'* has a particular religious and spiritual connotation, referring to one who acts as a mediator or intercessor between God and man. He is believed to be pre-eminently a repository of esoteric knowledge, a channel of the Light of Muḥammad *(Nūr-i Muḥammadī),* with a station of merit almost equal to that of the Prophet. His existence is understood to be necessary both for the salvation of the believer and for the maintenance of the creation.

Before his death, the *imām* appoints a successor, who inherits a divine power from his predecessor. As such, he is regarded as superior to other human beings, and is believed to enjoy a state of sinlessness *(ʿithmah).* Because of his sinlessness and the transmission of divine power, some *Shīʿahs* have gone so far as to regard the *imām* as an incarnation of God, a belief that is generally regarded as heretical in Islam. Since most *Shīʿah* groups agree that there can be only one *imām* at a time, disagreement as to the identity of the living *imām* has caused various splits within the *Shīʿah.*

The Twelvers maintain that there is a permanent need for an *imām,* a divinely guided spiritual teacher and ruler. The eleventh *imām* died in 873, two hundred and fifty years after the death of the Prophet, leaving his four-year-old son, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, as the twelfth and last *imām.* But from the time of his father's death, the twelfth *imām* remained out of sight. Few people saw him, and his will was made known to the *Shīʿah* faithful through four successive representatives, the first having been secretary to his father. This period is known as the 'lesser occultation *(al-ghayb al-ṣughrá)*'. The last representative of the twelfth *imām* died in 940, having declined to nominate a successor. This marked the beginning of the 'greater occultation' *(al-ghayb al-kubrá)* in which the twelfth *imām* is believed to be alive, but invisible.

For this reason, the twelfth *imām* became known as the Hidden *Imām.* It is believed that he is still hidden from humanity in the Unseen state, awaiting the Resurrection and end of the world, when he will be revealed again as the *Mahdī,* who will come in the last days. Various beliefs exist among *Shīʿah* groups as to the precise sequence of events before and on the Day of Resurrection.

The Ismāʿīlī branch of the *Shīʿahs* also stress the permanent need for a sinless, infallible *imām.* but they believe that there is always one such *imām* in the world. They take a cyclical view of history and believe that in each prophetic era, seven *imāms* follow the 'speaker-prophet *(nāṭiq)*' and his legatee *(waṣī).* Hence, the Ismāʿīlīs are also called the 'Seveners'. In the present (sixth era), the *nāṭiq* was Muḥammad and the *waṣī* was his cousin and son-in-law, ʿAlī. The seventh *imām* is understood to have been Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar who, traditionally, is expected to return and to become the seventh speaker-prophet, the *nāṭiq* of the next era. On this matter, however, Ismāʿīlīs have themselves diverged.

A third *Shīʿah* group, the *Zaydīyah,* who became dominant in Yemen during the early tenth century, is doctrinally closer to the *Sunnīs* than other *Shīʿah* schools. They do not consider their *imām* to be sinless or divinely protected from error, nor do they recognize a hereditary line of *imāms.* They believe that after the first three *imāms,* ʿAlī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the Imamate passed to Zayd, son of Ḥusayn, after whom it became the inheritance of any qualified

descendant of Ḥasan or Ḥusayn who was opposed to any ruler regarded as illegitimate. The qualifications, in addition to genealogical descent, include piety, integrity, courage, and learning in religion and law. The Imamate can also be forfeited by a moral offence or if found to be lacking in any essential qualification. *Zaydī imāms* have been the Muslim spiritual leaders of the area since the early tenth century and, with the departure of the Turks in 1917, have also assumed the temporal leadership.

One of the most well-known literary proponents of the *Ismāʿīlīyah* was Nāṣir-i Khusraw; and, in his *Dīvān,* he writes a number of verses in praise of the *imām.* The *imām* of his day, mentioned in his poetry, was Imām Mustanṣir (*d.*1045) of Cairo:

You may take your vacation wherever you wish –
I'll head for the threshold of the Compassionate,
turning my head towards the guide of Truth, like Salman,
to the household of the Messenger,
there to become a humble slave –
There, where in the glory of the *imām,*
I shall make my name the frontispiece of the Book of Fame,
that Sun of gnosis will brighten my heart
like the moon in Cancer;
That ocean of grace will fill my heart
as a casket of pearls, sunken treasure and corals. . . .

If you yearn to gaze upon that blessed countenance, that holy face,
then hurry to the threshold of the Imām Mustanṣir,
and do him the honour to approach – face in the dust,
pointing towards that *Kaʿbah* of this world and the hereafter –
that sacred temple of glory and majesty.
The sun dims before his shining face,
and the universe before his doorstep appears but a heap of dirt.
By your sword, by your words, the battlefield and pulpit
have at last attained to grandeur;
Without your blessed face, the world itself remains unknown,
naked and unadorned.
Only by your knowledge has religion been known:
religion is the frankincense,
your heart the pyx (testing place). . . .

I will show you how and when to bow and prostrate yourself,
like a cypress in the morning breeze:
The wise man humbles himself before the one
whom God has chosen among all creatures for a guide,

the one whose works of justice have erased from the world's face
every smudge of oppression: the *imām* of the time.
What sorcerer could make a magic to compare
with that of his lovers, the partisans of the *imām?*
So wise, one might think him more than human,
so much more generous than his station demands,
justly seated in the place of highest honour,
the planet Mars set as a jewel in his bezel ring. . . .

Old man, if you confess I'm right,
then ʿAlī is your *imām,* and after him Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.
Don't deny it, don't tell me
that after the Prophet you need no mediator.
The gnosis of ʿAlī is no
"personal opinion of the eminent So-and-so" –
it's as priceless as some rare and mythical gem.
Acknowledge him, learn from him,
strengthen the sinews of faith,
and delight the heart's inner eye.
The Water of Life flows beneath his sweet words –
drink and die no more forever. . . .

O *imām,* in whose noble essence
God's purpose in making the world has been fulfilled,
know that to me, the slave of devotion,
the flinty stones of Yumgān valley
are worth more than the pearls of the Gulf.
When you have bestowed upon me all eternity,
why should I bother with this insipid world? . . .

Now that I lean for support on God and on Islam,
I grow weary of the world and of men,
and by God's grace I am freed of need
for anyone who does not need me.
The blessed *Qur'ān* reposes in my heart,
which is filled with its peace.
Praise the Lord, that nothing burdens my back
but His favour and grace,
that, thanks to the generosity of the true *imām,*
I have come to know his truth,
his certainty and the justice of his cause –
That matchless king whose domain, of all the earth,
is free of devilry;

Who has robbed Jupiter, in its constellation of fortune,
of all auspiciousness and joy.
Lord, help me to spend my days and nights in devotion to him,
to string together, from time to time,
a few pious verses based on his knowledge and wisdom.

*Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Dīvān, DNKR pp.304, 148–49, 14, 158, 431, 216, NKD pp.26, 46, 85, 94, 114–15, 122*

In his verses, Nāṣir-i Khusraw portrays the *Shīʿah imām* as a holy man or saint, and Sufis have also used the term for holy men. Rūmī, characteristically, provides himself with many opportunities to pay tribute to the perfect saints. In the process, he uses a number of Sufi and Muslim terms for them, which are generally given more specific meanings. Alluding to a well-known *ḥadīth* in which God says, "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted to be known,"[2] Rūmī reveals the key whereby God makes himself known. He writes, "I was a treasure, a hidden mercy, so I sent forth a rightly guided *imām.*"[3] And specifically – and at the same time pointing out that such saints have transcended all sectarian differences – Rūmī maintains: "In every epoch, a saint arises.... That saint... is the living *imām* who arises in every age, whether he be a descendant of ʿUmar or of ʿAlī."[4]

Similarly, according to another *ḥadīth:*

The Prophet said, "One who dies without knowing the *imām* of his time dies in ignorance."

*Ḥadīth, in CIT1 p.90, in SSE3 p.60*

The term *imām* having general as well as specific meanings, Sufis have used it in a variety of contexts. Sufi thought includes a hierarchy of living saints or friends of God *(awliyāʾ),* whose function is to maintain equilibrium in the world. At the head of this hierarchy is the *quṭb* (pole, axis), flanked – in some descriptions – by two *imāms (imāmān).* The attention of the *imām* on the right is said to be directed towards the angelic realm *(ʿālam-i malakūt),* while that of the *imām* on the left is towards this world. The latter is regarded as the higher of the two, and is said to replace the *quṭb* when the *quṭb* leaves this world.[5] The categorization of this saintly hierarchy varies among the Sufi systematizers, however, and some authorities say that there are three such saintly *imāmān,* also called the three vicegerents *(khulafāʾ).*[6]

Sometimes, the *quṭb* himself is also called the *imām.* But the identity of the *quṭb* or *imām* being hidden, the one who holds the position is naturally a matter of speculation. Kharaqānī observes that, whoever the *imām* may be, he will have full consciousness of the entire creation:

> People maintain that So-and-so is the *imām.* No one is an *imām* unless he is aware of all that God created from the heavens to the earth, from east to west.
>
> *Kharaqānī, in Tadhkirat al-Awliyā' 2, TAN2 pp.214–15, in SSE6 p.20*

In its general sense, *imām* implies one who is a leader. Taken this way, a number of Sufis have applied the title to various outer and inner realities. Thus, the perfect man *(al-insān al-kāmil),* the greatest master *(al-shaykh al-akbar),* the Primal Intelligence *(al-ʿAql al-Awwal),* the Supreme Pen *(al-Qalam al-ʿAlá),* and the Well-Guarded Tablet *(al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ),* on which the *Qur'ān* and all destinies are said to be written, have each been identified as an *imām.* They are all primary or 'leading' realities from which other realities emanate. Suʿād al-Ḥakīm calls them the *Imām Mubīn* (Undoubtable *Imām*).[7]

Sufi thought sees the creation as the manifestation of divine Names and Attributes, all of which emanate from the Supreme Name *(al-Ism al-Aʿẓam).* There are said to be seven primary divine Names, each one of which can be regarded as an *imām,* and which are the foundation of all the other divine Names. The seven primary Names are: the Living *(al-Ḥayy),* the All-Knowing *(al-ʿAlīm),* the All-Willing *(al-Murīd),* the All-Powerful *(al-Qādir),* the All-Hearing *(al-Samīʿ),* the All-Seeing *(al-Baṣīr)* and the All-Uttering *(al-Mutakallim),*[8] although there are variations in the list.[9] Of these, some Sufis say that the ultimate *Imām* or *Imām* of *Imāms (Imām al-A'immah)* is the Living *(al-Ḥayy),*[10] others say it is the All-Knowing *(al-ʿAlīm).*[11]

See also: **Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq** (Glossary), **Mahdī**.

1. Suʿād al-Ḥakīm, *al-Muʿjam al-Ṣūfī* 42, *AMAS* p.110, in *SSE6* p.21.
2. *Ḥadīth, AMBF* 70.
3. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:364, *MJR2* p.240.
4. Rūmī, *Maśnavī* II:815, 817, *MJR2* p.263.
5. Jurjānī, *Taʿrīfāt, KTJ* p.38, *KTA* p.53, in *SSE6* pp.19–20; al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah* 23, *GSTA* p.10, *GST* p.6; Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, *Rasā'il, RNV4* p.11, in *SSE6* p.20.
6. Abū ʿUthmān Qurrī, in *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn, KIFT3* p.58; *cf.* in *SSE6* pp.14–15.
7. Suʿād al-Ḥakīm, *al-Muʿjam al-Ṣūfī* 45, *AMAS* p.111, in *SSE6* p.21.
8. *E.g.* al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah* 31, *GSTA* p.12, *GST* pp.7–8; Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i Rāz* 283, *SGR* p.54, *SGR* pp.215, 736, in *SSE13* pp.70–71.
9. *E.g.* Jāmī, *Naqd al-Nuṣūṣ, NN* p.40, in *SSE13* pp.70–71; Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, *Rasā'il, RNV3* p.330, in *SSE13* p.69.
10. *E.g.* Shāh Niʿmat Allāh Valī, *Rasā'il, RNV3* p.330, in *SSE13* p.69; *Rawḥ al-Arwāḥ, RASA* p.490, in *FNI13* pp.174–75, in *SSE13* p.172.
11. *E.g.* al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfīyah* 31, *GSTA* pp.12–13, *GST* pp.7–8.

*Section 7.1 continued in volume 8*



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*Those books cited in PART II are listed here, alphabetically, by title. Leading definite and indefinite articles in the various languages (*i.e. *'the', 'a', 'an', al-, le, la, die,* etc.*) are ignored when alphabetizing. Dates in square brackets are the first publication of the work. Dates are CE unless otherwise stated. For books published in Iran which do not state whether the calendar used is AH or SH, we have given the calendar as AH/SH. Languages (listed alphabetically) include the romanization of various non-roman scripts, and indicate the main languages used in a book, not necessarily every language that happens to appear.*


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vijjā-caraṇa-sampanna (Pa) *See* vidyā-charaṇa-sampanna 7.1
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xiàn (C) 7.2
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xiǎnchū (C) *See* xiàn 7.2
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xiānsheng (C) *See* sensei 7.1
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xūtuóhuán (C) *See* srotāpanna 7.1

yab mes (T) *See* zǔ 7.1
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yadullāhi (A) *See* yad Allāh 7.1
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yamaka-pāṭihāriya (Pa) 7.3
yār (P) 7.1
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yathākammūpaga-ñāṇa (Pa) 7.3
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ye nas sangs rgyas (T) *See* Ādi-Buddha 7.1
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yogāvacara (Pa) 7.1
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ẓaddik (He) 7.1
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*Are there not enough names now?*
*Is this not the time to stop?*

*Lǎozǐ, Dàodé jīng 32, TTCW p.65*

